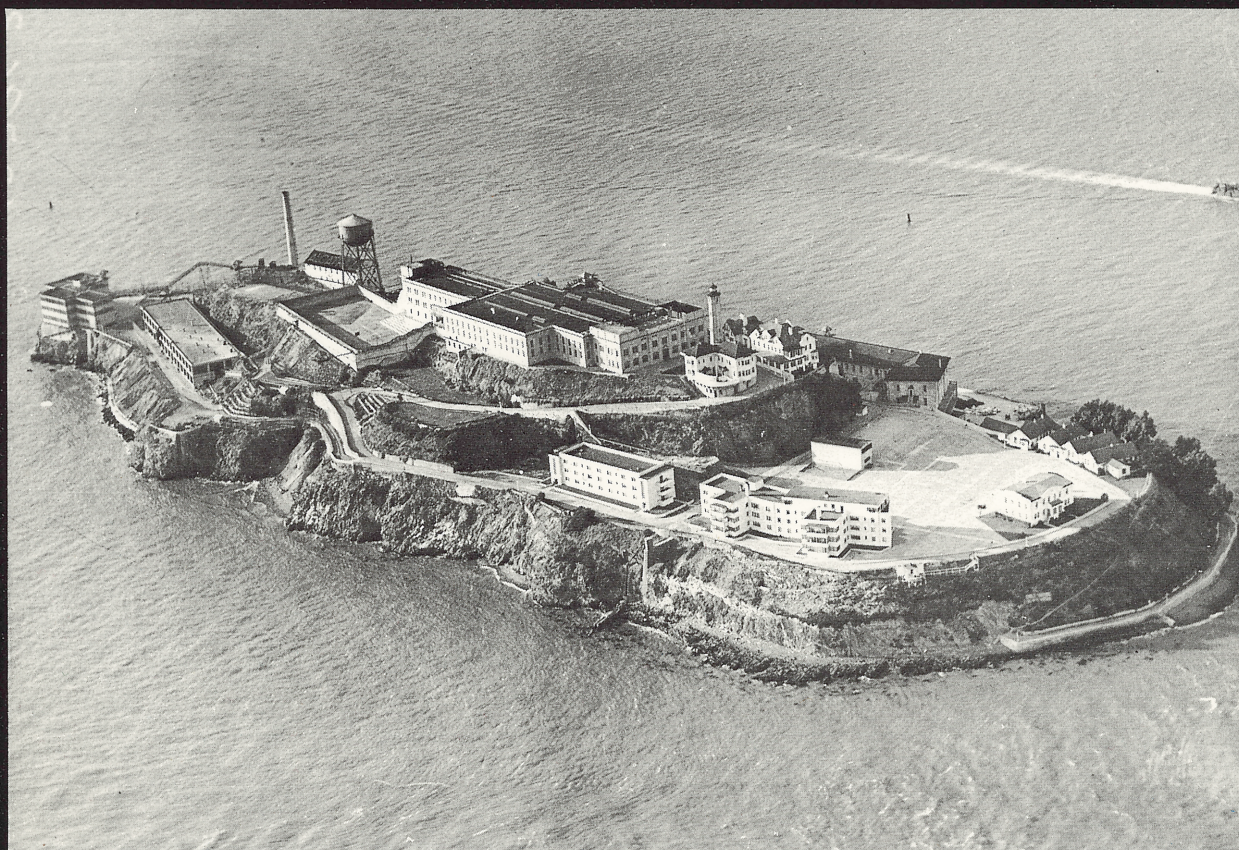


ALCATRAZ

FEDERAL PENITENTIARY

1934-1963



**HISTORY OF THE ISLAND
BIOS OF FAMOUS PRISONERS
ESCAPE ATTEMPTS**

ALCATRAZ

FEDERAL PENITENTIARY

1934-1963

TEXT BY

JAMES FULLER

RESEARCH AND EDITOR

YUMI GAY

DESIGN BY

PIERRE ODIER

Acknowledgments:

Many thanks to the following, without whose help this publication would not have been possible.

Associated Press
Clarence Carnes
Yumi Gay
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
George Gregory
Bob Kirby
John Martini
Pierre Odier
San Francisco Chronicle
San Francisco Examiner
San Francisco Public Library
United Press International
National Park Service

Every effort has been made to locate and acknowledge the sources of the photographs used in this brochure. We regret any instance in not acknowledging the correct source.

Thirty-first edition, August, 1997

Published by Asteron Production
P.O. Box 347311
San Francisco, California 94134

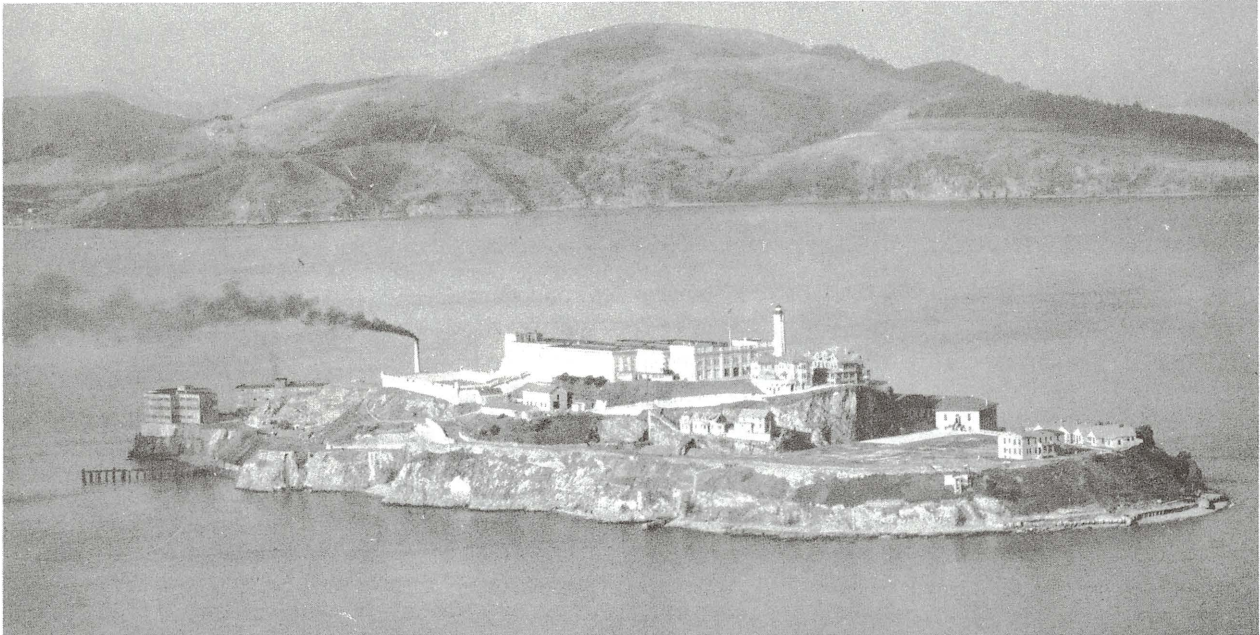
Copyright © 1982 ASTERON Production

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, electronic or mechanical, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review.

Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary 1934-1963
and other Alcatraz publications, along with
video documentaries of Alcatraz, can be
ordered at 1800alcatraz.com.

Alcatraz, a name that brings desolation and fear to man from its earliest days, as a symbol of punishment, as a sign of man's inability to cope with man without violence and repression, a place of unkindness and brute force and hatred and inhumanity...

ALCATRAZ: A HISTORY



The 12-acre rock island lies in the middle of the world's largest natural harbor. When one walks the hollow corridors today, especially on those fog-shrouded days the island knows so well, the echo of desperate footsteps resonates from the past. A penetrating chill seeps through the old brick walls, a souvenir of more solemn days.

It is an island of curious and protective "firsts." The first lighthouse on the west coast was located on this island, a marker to guide the tall ships to safety. The U.S. Army established the first west coast garrison on this mis-begotten island. They built heavy fortifications and constructed tactical batteries to strategically form a "cork" of cross-fire in the narrow Golden Gate. Notoriety for Alcatraz came with the Federal Penitentiary, different from other penal institutions in that its chief design was to hold the incorrigibles, the bad and the bold; a basket for the rottenest of apples.

The history of the little island in San Francisco Bay is very well chronicled. Discovered by the Spanish land expedition of Portolá in 1769, it took six years until a Spanish ship managed to find its way through the Golden Gate to chart the bay. (Despite intense exploration at sea, the Spanish and English explorers had missed San Francisco Bay!) It is thought that the

location of Alcatraz in the middle of the bay when seen from the sea, forms an illusion of land filling in the Golden Gate. Charts and records of the period show the Golden Gate as a small cove. At the time of the charting the barren island was white with pelicans and their guano; thus it was named *Isla de Alcatrazes* or the island of the pelicans. The 1846 transfer of the title by the governor of California to Julian Workman reads: "... a small island called Alcatrazes ... which has never been inhabited by any person or used for any purpose ..." Workman won the scramble for the island because he proposed the construction of a lighthouse to aid the navigation through the Golden Gate; a feat that was finally accomplished by the U.S. Army Engineers in 1854, while building their fortress.

This fortress boasted three batteries of long-range cannon, bomb-proof magazines, and a 35-foot-high brick citadel. The high citadel allowed observers a clear view of every point-of-fire around the island. The current prison building was built on what had been the underground quarters in the citadel.

Fine grained sandstone rock makes up the island and is not hospitable for much vegetation. In fact the island was barren except for some hardy grass,



moss and kelp. The army brought soil and plants after the construction of the citadel. Having no source of water or any springs, the military built large stone cisterns throughout the citadel. These were also incorporated in the foundation of the cellhouse. They led to the rumors of the damp dungeons below the prison.

As the fortress outlived its usefulness in defense of the bay, the walls were employed as the military stockade. Finally the main body of the main garrison was deployed to the Presidio, Fort Baker, and Angel Island. Alcatraz was designated as the Pacific Branch U.S. Disciplinary Barracks. Some modification of the citadel was done at this time. In fact, the original building had been changed throughout its existence during the end of the nineteenth century. The island survived the great 1906 earthquake with little damage. It was used to house the city's prison occupants until stability returned to San Francisco.

The Depression brought hard times to many, including the War Department. Money was tight, and costly operations were being scrutinized. Alcatraz was costing the military too much. The late 20's and early 30's brought a wave of crime throughout the entire nation. Nurtured on the lucrative bootlegging

and speakeasies of the Prohibition Era, gangs and mobsters turned to more violent crimes: robbery, kidnapping, murder and extortion. Amateurs driven by desperate need, found easy money worth the risk of being caught. Prisons were crowded. Daring escapes, gang murders and mass rioting were a menace to an orderly prison.

Attorney General Homer Cummings supported J. Edgar Hoover and the F.B.I.'s determined pursuit of criminals; but he realized there had to be a facility to safely control and incarcerate. It seemed that the more notorious the criminal, the greater the likelihood that the mobster would be "sprung" by supporting gang members. John Dillinger was a prime example. While on parole in 1933, Dillinger masterminded the escape of ten inmates of the Indiana State Prison. All were former members of the Dillinger gang. Several months later, three of the escapees returned the favor shooting a sheriff in Lima, Ohio and releasing Dillinger. In June 1933, the country was stunned by the bold shoot-out, with F.B.I. agents, in an attempt to release Frank Nash, an escaped convict. Five officers died and two were injured seriously. Murderers, thieves, kidnappers and hijackers became organized.

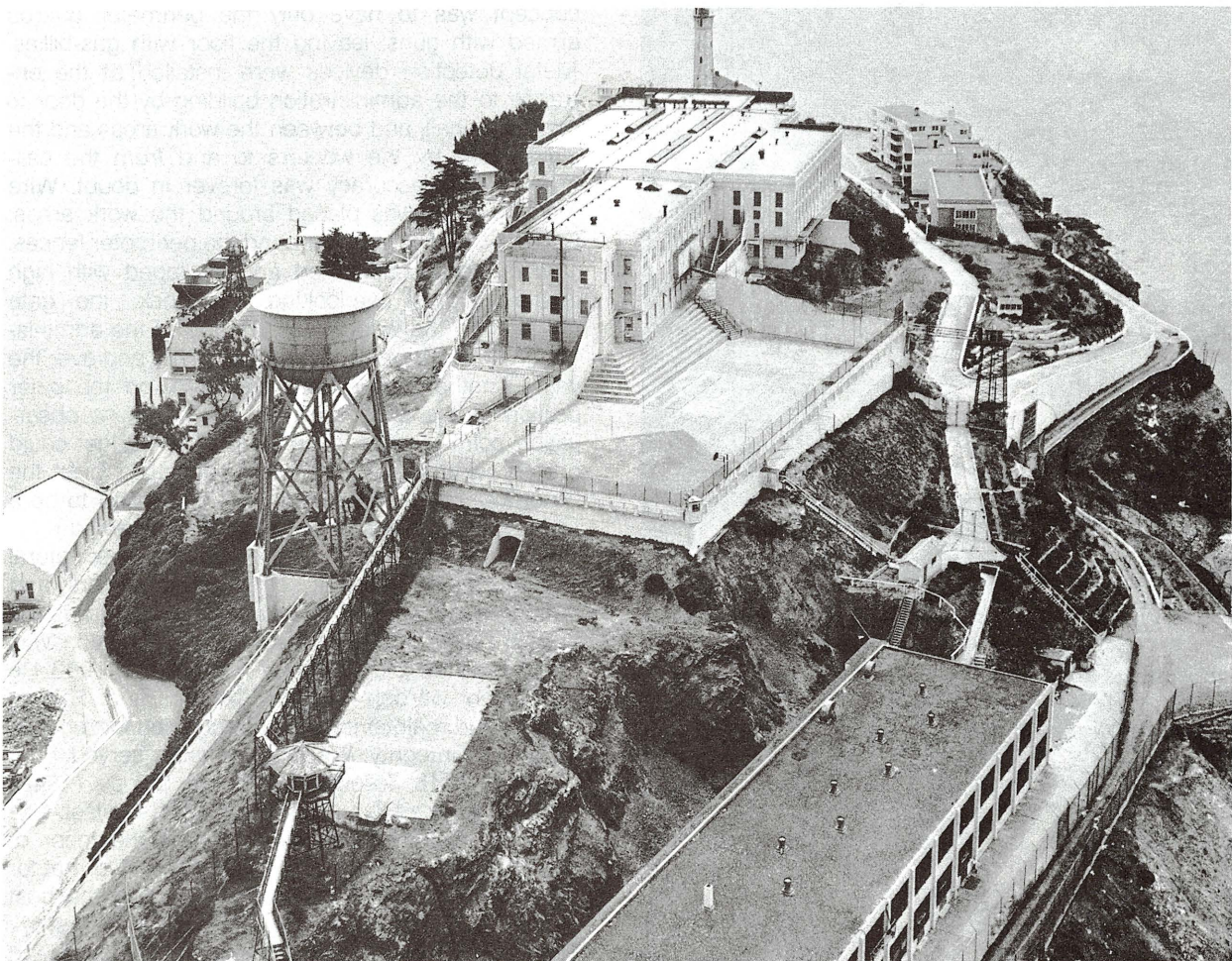
The head of the federal prisons, Sanford Bates, worked closely with the attorney general in a bold concept. Isolate the agitators and influential criminals in one institution. To find that the nexus of a maximum security prison stood ready to be abandoned by the federal government must have seemed incredible.

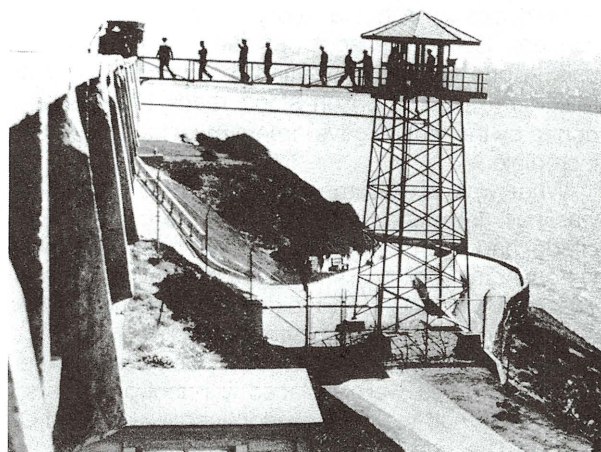
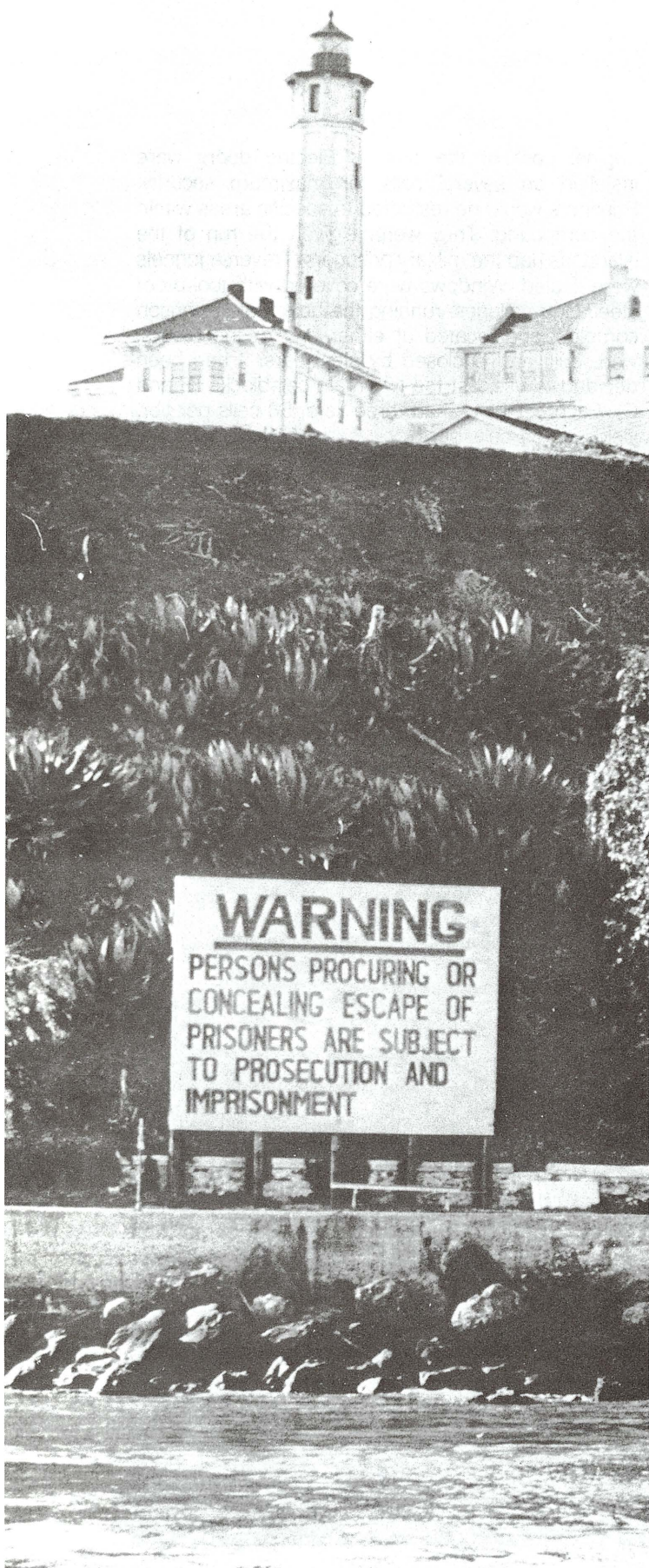
What was to become the main prison building, was built from the foundations of the citadel. The citadel had been torn down. The last major changes were when the army transformed the building into a disciplinary barracks. Still, extensive work had to be done to up-grade and secure the facility.

The soft steel bars, which had been used in the front of the cells, were replaced with tool-proof bars; but only on half the cells, predominantly on B and C blocks. The budget was very tight, though in iron work alone the bill was \$216,927 (exceeding the

original cost of the prison). Electric doors were installed on several cells for maximum security. Prisoners would be restricted to specific areas within the compound. They weren't given the run of the island, as had the military prisoners. Traverse tunnels were sealed. Windows were covered with tool-proof steel. Gun galleries, running the height of the prison complex, and located at either end of the blocks, were built and enclosed by steel bars. It had been decided to use just the two main cell-blocks (B and C). Each cell-block had three tiers, 58 cells per tier, yielding 174 cells per block, and 348 total. (D block was later incorporated for isolation.)

The original transfer from the War Department to the Justice Department called for the maintaining of the laundry facilities on the island to care for the area's army laundry needs. Fresh water would be provided by the army's boats, though the Justice Department had to pay its share of the expense.





Security was extremely important. Bates wanted the inclusion of a tear-gas system, built into the ceilings of the cell-blocks and the dining area. The concept was to have only the perimeter guards armed with guns, leaving the floor with gas-billies. Metal detection devices were installed at the entrance to the administration building by the door to the dining hall, and between the work areas and the stairs used by the workers to and from the cell-blocks. Their accuracy was forever in doubt. Wire mesh fencing was placed around the work areas. Barbed wire was strung around the perimeter fences. Towers were constructed and equipped with high intensity lights overlooking the dock, the gate entrance to the work areas, the top of the administration building, behind the power plant, and over the yard. Another tower was requested, on the outer portion of the shop area, as there was no observation point for this "blind" area. The budget could only provide that steel mesh be placed over the windows on that side instead. (This proved to be a favored escape point and was later remedied.)

The physical facility was renovated, the natural barriers were excellent; chilling bay waters and prohibitive currents. The only thing missing was the human "walls" of the prison. James Johnston was asked to fill the role of warden in October of 1933. He had been warden of San Quentin and Folsom prisons and maintained a high reputation for rehabilitation and integrity. Warden Johnston served from 1934 to 1948, followed by Edwin Swope (1948-1955), Paul Madigan (1955-1961) and the last, Olin Blackwell (1961-1963). Johnston set the tenor of mystique in his application of the rules and format for the operation of the prison. He selected the best guards and officers from the federal penal system. They were all given special training at McNeil Island in Washington.

In December 1933, Sanford Bates issued a memo to the attorney general outlining some of the fundamental principles the island was to operate under:

- All privileges to inmates would be limited.
- Visitors are to be earned, with no visitation allowed in the first three months of a convict's residence, and when earned limited to one visit per month.
- No parole officer would be appointed and no regularly scheduled parole board meetings were to be held.
- Inmates can obtain attorneys only through application to the attorney general.
- Prisoners were to come to Alcatraz through other penal institutions. There would be no direct commitments from the courts.
- While a usual library would be provided, there would be no newspapers, magazines, radios or other forms of entertainment allowed.
- No original letters were to be delivered to inmates; only typewritten copies of letters after they had been screened.

Warden Johnston added a few ramifications and nuances to the basic design sent to him. Visitors must be family and limited to two people per monthly visit.

One prisoner per cell was the original design. The 5' x 9' x 7' cells were equipped with a steel bed with a mattress, a foldout table and chair, two shelves, a toilet and a sink. This was to prove to be a luxury to many, as most inmates were used to four or even six per cell. From 1934 to 1940 Johnston established and maintained a "no talking" rule in the cellhouse. This was later to be assessed as one of the inhumane treatments and was suspended.

All privileges had one thing in common, they could be taken away. At first, the only work done on Alcatraz was the operation of the laundry for the military and the basic maintenance of the island. Warden Johnston noticed, very early on, that the inmates who were allowed to work, took great pride in what they did. It became apparent that the tedium of incarceration was the hardest row to hoe for the prisoners. Eventually several additional operations were put into effect.



Prisoners passing thru metal detector as they return from shops



Typical cell

There was corporal punishment on Alcatraz — at least as much as in the other federal penitentiaries. Despite rumors of deadly dungeons, Johnston used subterranean rooms (the old storage areas in the citadel) as isolation cells, but the walls were so loose that prisoners had to be shackled to the ceiling. Eventually D block was used for isolation, though prior to its renovation one escape attempt from this unit occurred.

It had been decided that the wardens of all the federal prisons would select inmates from their populations for transfer to Alcatraz. The guidelines were simple: send the most troublesome prisoners, gang leaders, escape artists and prisoners with long and/or violent prison records. They were

transported by train, at first in large groups, and later one at a time. It was 5:00 a.m. Sunday morning, August 18, 1934 when the final passenger boarded the specially modified train in Atlanta. Fifty-three of the most dangerous and influential prisoners at Atlanta, including Al Capone, were on their way to San Francisco. They had boarded the train just outside the prison walls. They would follow a special route stopping only for maintenance and crew changes, under strict security and with no publicity. The train was switched to approach the bay from Marin County, bringing it to the quiet community of Tiburon. From there the cars were loaded onto a barge and brought to the Alcatraz docks. It had been virtually a door-to-door trip.

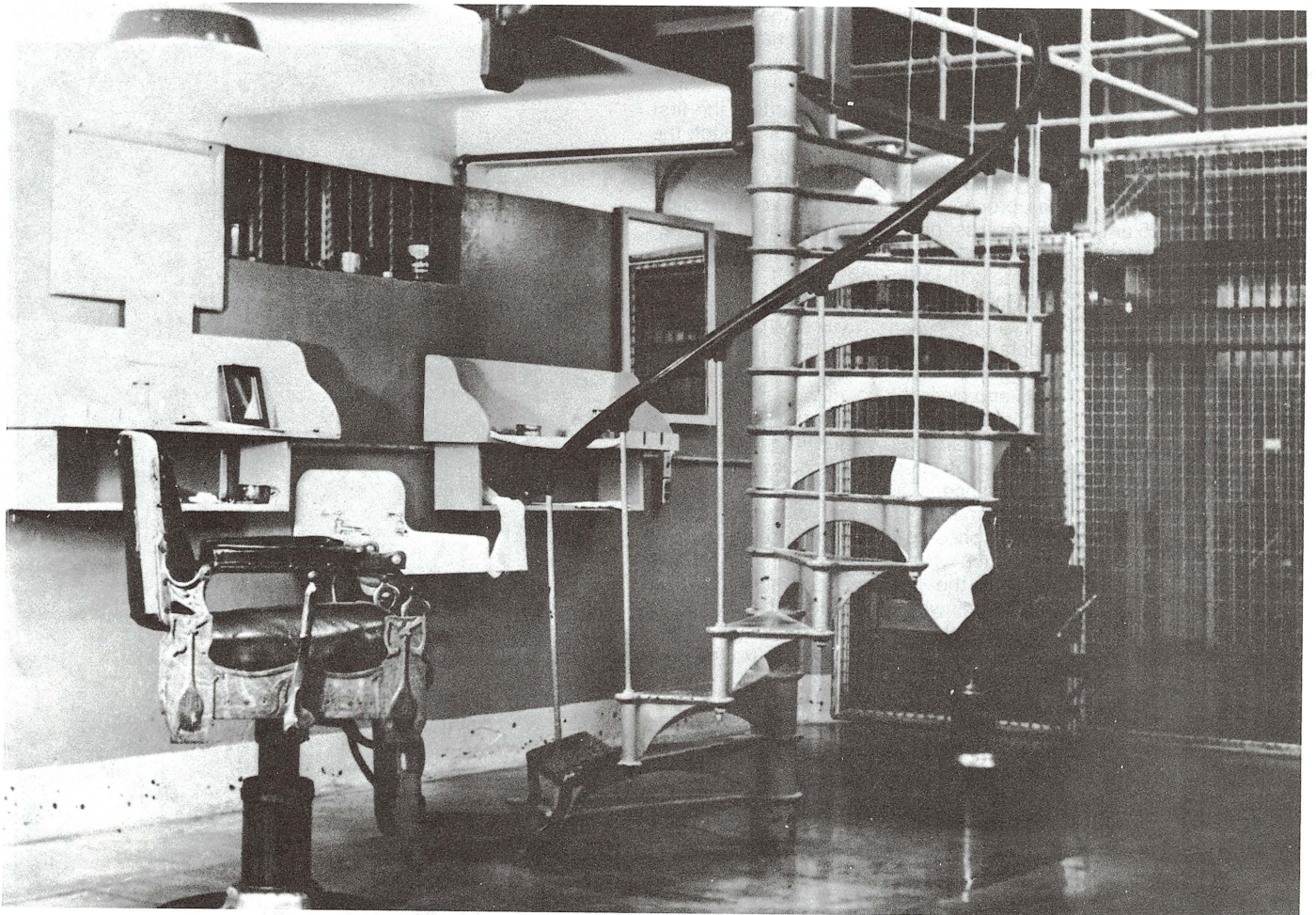
These were not the first prisoners to enter the penitentiary. The army had left 32 prisoners in federal custody as of July 1, 1934. Fourteen inmates had been transferees from McNeil Island on August 11th. That allowed Warden Johnston and his men a "rehearsal" of handling the prisoners. The last mass movement of prisoners brought "Machine Gun" Kelly and 102 others from Leavenworth and Leavenworth Annex.

Prisoners adapted quickly to the new routines. The intense security measures were the first outstanding change. There were 13 official head counts in each 24-hour period plus six verification counts. Random counts were thrown in. Bathing and clothing changes were scheduled for twice a week and heavily regimented. (Prisoners working in the kitchens bathed daily.)

Recreation was extremely limited. The recreation yard was limited in size, allowing baseball, horse-shoes, dominos, and various card games. The only other recreation was to be found in the prison library. Here the Justice Department had inherited the army's collection of novels and when supplemented with Warden Johnston's allocations, Alcatraz boasted a most diverse library.

Another outstanding feature of Alcatraz was the food. The nutritional value and quality were highly touted. Even throughout the rationing of foods during World War II, the prison maintained a very good kitchen. Prisoners were given full freedom to select what they wanted from a posted menu for each meal, but waste was not allowed. A prisoner who wasted food was quite often denied his next meal. In the first few years, the rule of silence applied to the dining hall, but this proved very hard to enforce. The time allowed for eating, like every other aspect of life on Alcatraz, was regimented: approximately 20 minutes per meal. Eating utensils had to be placed on the trays in a prescribed manner, and each tray was checked prior to the dismissal of the prisoners from the mess hall.

The monotony of the routine served to irritate many of the inmates, despite the simple diversions of the library and their jobs. For these people the warden would counsel: "Take each day of your sentence, one day at a time. Don't think how far you have to go, but how far you've come." While the attention and advice helped many, it never eased the tedium.



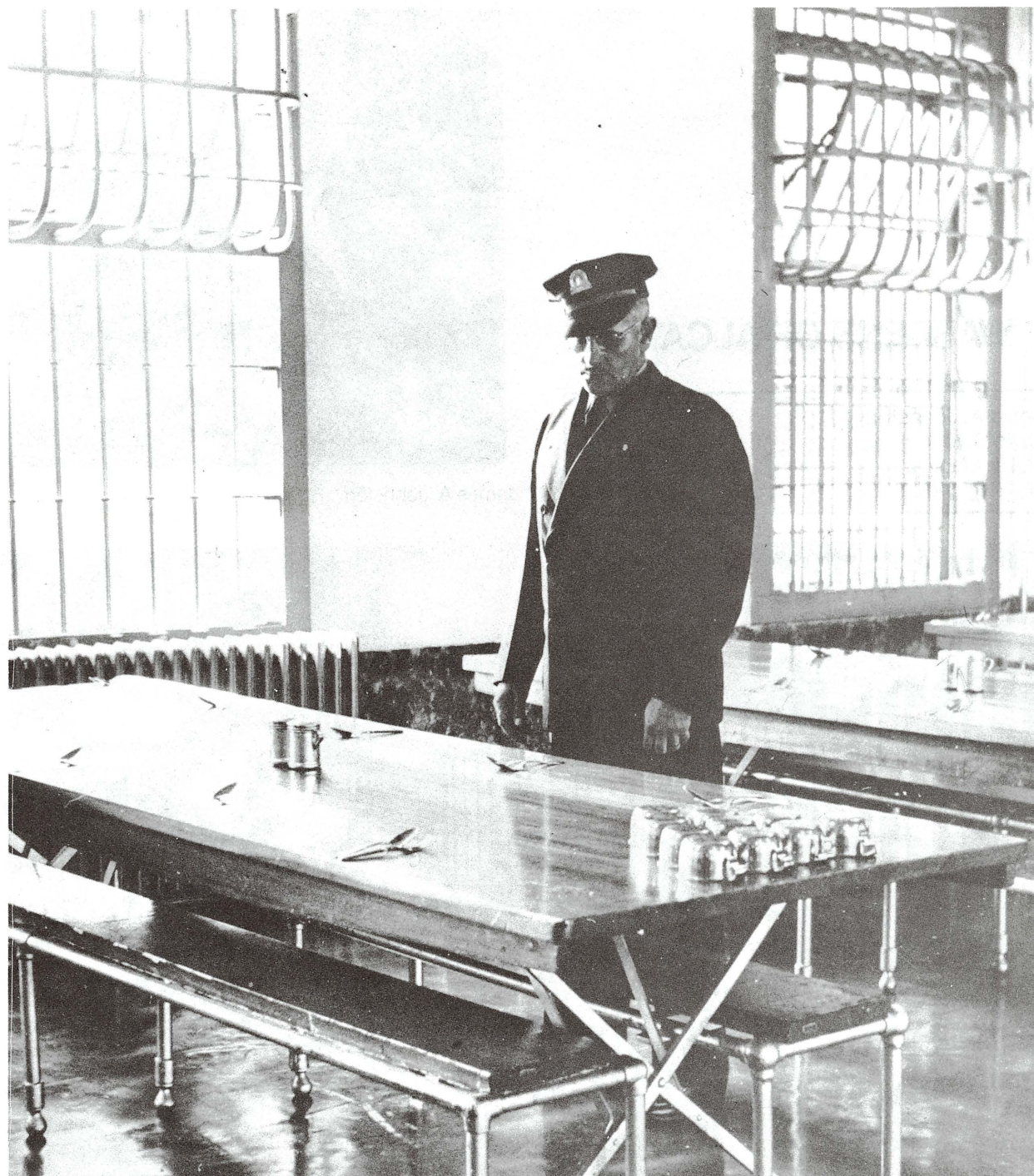
Barber Shop

DAILY ROUTINE OF WORK AND COUNTS:

- 6:30 am—Morning Gong. Prisoners arise, make beds, place all articles in prescribed order on shelf, clean wash basin and toilet bowl, wipe off bars, sweep cell floor, fold table, wash and dress.
- 6:50 am—Second Morning Gong. Prisoners stand by the cell doors facing out, remaining still until the whistle. Cell house guards of both shifts make the count. If count is accurate, cells are unlocked.
- 6:55 am—First Whistle Signal. Inmates step out of cells and stand facing mess hall. On second whistle, inmates form a single file.
- 7:00 am—Third Whistle Signal. Lower right tier of C-block and lower left tier of B-block move into mess hall, each line followed by, in turn, the second and third tiers, then by the lower tier on the opposite side of their block, then the respective second and third tiers of those blocks. C-block stays to the left of the center of the mess hall; B-block stays to the right of the center of the mess hall. The line on the left will be served from the serving tables on the left and occupy the tables on the left; the right line to the right, etc. Twenty minutes are allowed for eating. When finished, prisoners place utensils on the trays in the prescribed manner and sit erect with their hands at their sides. When all are through, guards will inspect the trays and return to stations.
- 7:20 am—On signal from the Deputy Warden, the first detail in each line rises and exits through the rear-door of the cell house to the Recreation Yard. Inside details or those not assigned a detail, proceed to work positions or their cells.
- 7:25 am—With guards proceeding through the rear gates, guards and their details move out the rear-gate in the following order: 1. Laundry, 2. Tailor Shop, 3. Cobblers, 4. Model Shop, 5. All Other Shops, 6. Labor, Gardening and policing details. As prisoners pass through rear gates, guards take count of their respective details and clear the count with the rear-gate guard. details proceed to work areas in single file, with guard following. On arrival to their respective job sites, details halt and face the shop entrance.
- 7:30 am—Shop foremen count detail as the line enters the shop, phoning the count to the lieutenant of the watch while signing a count slip for surrender to the lieutenant making his first rounds. Meanwhile, the rear-gate guard turns in his total count to the lieutenant of the watch.
- 9:30 am—Rest Period, prisoners allowed to smoke in designated areas.
- 9:38 am—On Whistle Signal: all of the men on each floor of the shops assemble at prescribed points and are counted, returning to work immediately. The count is written and signed and surrendered to the lieutenant on the next rounds.
- 11:30 am—Work details stop and assemble in front of the shops, where a count is taken. The count is phoned to the lieutenant and the detail proceeds to the rear-gate, where the detail is checked in with the rear-gate guard.
- 11:35 am—The mess hall line forms in the Recreation Yard in same order as in the morning. The details proceed in the same manner into Dinner meal.
- 11:40 am—Dinner routine is the same as Breakfast; however, prisoners return to their cells instead of forming work details.
- 12:00 pm—Detail guards remain in front of the cells until the prisoners are locked-up. The noon count is then made.
- 12:20 pm—Unlock and proceed the same as before going to Breakfast, except prisoners march in single file into the Recreation Yard.
- 12:25 pm—Shop details, formed in front of their guards, check out of the rear-gate in the same procedure as in the morning.
- 12:30 pm—Details enter shops and are counted by the foreman or guards as in the morning.
- 2:30 pm—Rest Period, with the same procedures and count as in the morning.
- 4:15 pm—Work stops, details are counted and return procedures are repeated.
- 4:20 pm—Prisoners are counted while details enter the rear gate.
- 4:25 pm—Prisoners enter the mess hall from the Recreation Yard for Supper.
- 4:45 pm—Prisoners return to their cells.
- 4:50 pm—Final Lock-up.
- 5:00 pm—Standing count in the cells by both shifts.
- 8:00 pm—Standing count in cells.
- 9:30 pm—Lights out count.
- 12:01 am—Count by the lieutenants and both shifts.
- 3:00 am—Count in the cells.
- 5:00 am—Count in the cells.



Breakfast Menu



Dining hall with correctional officer

Hygiene was equally regimented. Prisoners were compelled to shave three times a week. Each prisoner was given his own shaving cup, brush and soap.

On June 30, 1935, Alcatraz completed its first full year as a federal penitentiary. It was considered a rousing success, both as a secure place for the detention of the more difficult type of criminal and as

a deterrent, by the other penitentiaries. The Bureau of Prisons concluded its report: "No serious disturbance of any kind has been reported during the year."

The "escape-proof" maximum security prison had yet to be truly tested.

WARDENS OF ALCATRAZ

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| James A. Johnston | 1934-1948 |
| Edwin Swope | 1948-1955 |
| Paul J. Madigan | 1955-1961 |
| Olin Blackwell | 1961-1963 |



James A. Johnston



Warden Johnston touring with V.I.P.'s.
L to R: Angelo Rossi, Mayor of San Francisco; Cummings, Johnston
and Police Chief Wm. Quinn of San Francisco



Paul J. Madigan



Edwin Swope



Olin Blackwell

ALPHONSE CAPONE AZ #85



The name most often associated with Alcatraz was that of Big Al "Scarface" Capone. It is considered a tribute to the formidable geography of the island and the indelible integrity of its warden and officers that Al Capone, leader of the best organized underworld operation in America, was contained for 4½ years. His treatment was like that of any other prisoner, which cannot be said of the other penal institutions in which Capone "did time."

It might be conjectured that the basic design of Alcatraz was indirectly geared just for Capone and the like. There was a definite fear, on the part of the prison systems, that the gang members would try to spring Capone. The Capone organization seemed the true test.

Alphonse Capone came to Brooklyn as a child with his parents. He was born in Castellamare, Italy. He grew up as a thief, was a pimp before puberty, and a bouncer in the local brothels. He was a husky, gutsy kid and a smart one as well. He knew he had to get out of Brooklyn after beating up a local politician's son. With the help of a man named Johnny Torrio he hid in Chicago.

It was 1919 and Al Capone was a 20-year-old bouncer at The Four Deuces. Soon he was managing the place, under the alias of Al Brown, and rising in the Torrio organization. The Volstead Act came into effect on January 16, 1920. The next morning came bootlegging, speakeasies, and a whole new industry of local organized crime. During the 1920's the underworld grew, and through all the power shifts in Chicago the Capone faction grew.

It has been estimated that by 1924 Capone was making nearly \$100,000 a week. That was just his cut from the prostitution, gambling halls, dog tracks and bootlegging. There was big money to be made. With that risk came a high demand for more, and a low regard for life. The Capone group played the game well. After years of inter-gang warfare, it was conceded that his name topped the list of power in Chicago. Al Capone didn't "win" with just muscle. He "greased" the political machinery of a city that thrived on such "grease." He opened soup kitchens and even sponsored a bill dating bottled milk, despite heavy dairy group protests, so that the children of the city wouldn't have to drink sour milk.

The record shows that Al Capone spent a year in a prison in Philadelphia for possessing a concealed weapon. There is strong sentiment that Capone *sought* that jail sentence as a safe place to hide. He needed to hide from rival gang members after his orchestration of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. It is a fact that, though bail was set at \$35,000, Capone was carrying \$50,000 cash! Still, he elected to go to jail. It is also a fact that the state paid for a private phone line from Capone's cell in the penitentiary to his offices in Chicago. He was granted unlimited visiting privileges, was allowed to furnish his cell with personal goods (thick carpeting, radio, etc.) and even was offered a tickertape machine! Reportedly it was here that Capone outlined the formal organization for his city which he implemented on his return to Chicago. A board of directors for the Capone organization was established and all aspects of his business were delegated and monitored.

Today the F.B.I. consists primarily of lawyers and accountants. The reason is quite simple: it's not always easy to hide money. Capone took a big tumble on tax evasion, specifically for the period 1925-1929. The sentences and fines added up to ten years in a federal penitentiary and a year to follow, on a state offense, with a \$37,000 fine.

On May 4, 1932, Al Capone began serving his federal jail sentence in Atlanta. Public Enemy #1 was doing time. It became questionable what kind of "time" he was doing in Atlanta. While the luxuries of his first prison experience were more extreme, it became apparent that Capone was currying favor with guards and fellow inmates. He was literally buying his time. It has been said that Capone had more control of the prison than did the warden. There was also the fear of Capone's men attempting an escape for him. When the maximum security of Alcatraz became available, Capone was on one of the first trains to San Francisco.

It was safe to say it was not quite what Capone had in mind. He spent his initial interview with Warden Johnston explaining his special needs. He told of his friends and family and asked for extra visiting rights. The rules were explained: family visitors *only*, one visit a month per prisoner, and two

people per visit were the maximum. Capone's response was, "It looks like Alcatraz got me licked."

His first work assignment was in the laundry. When local soldiers got wind of it, they told their families what Big Al was doing. He was soon transferred to cleaning the bathhouse. He found the stringent rules difficult, mostly the silence rules. Capone was a gregarious and congenial man, but eventually became simply #85. He was jeered at by fellow inmates simply because he was no bigger than the petty thief in Alcatraz. Consequently other inmates tried to pick several fights with him. During one of these fights, Capone was stabbed with a pair of shears by Jimmy Lucas. The wound was superficial and nothing came of it.

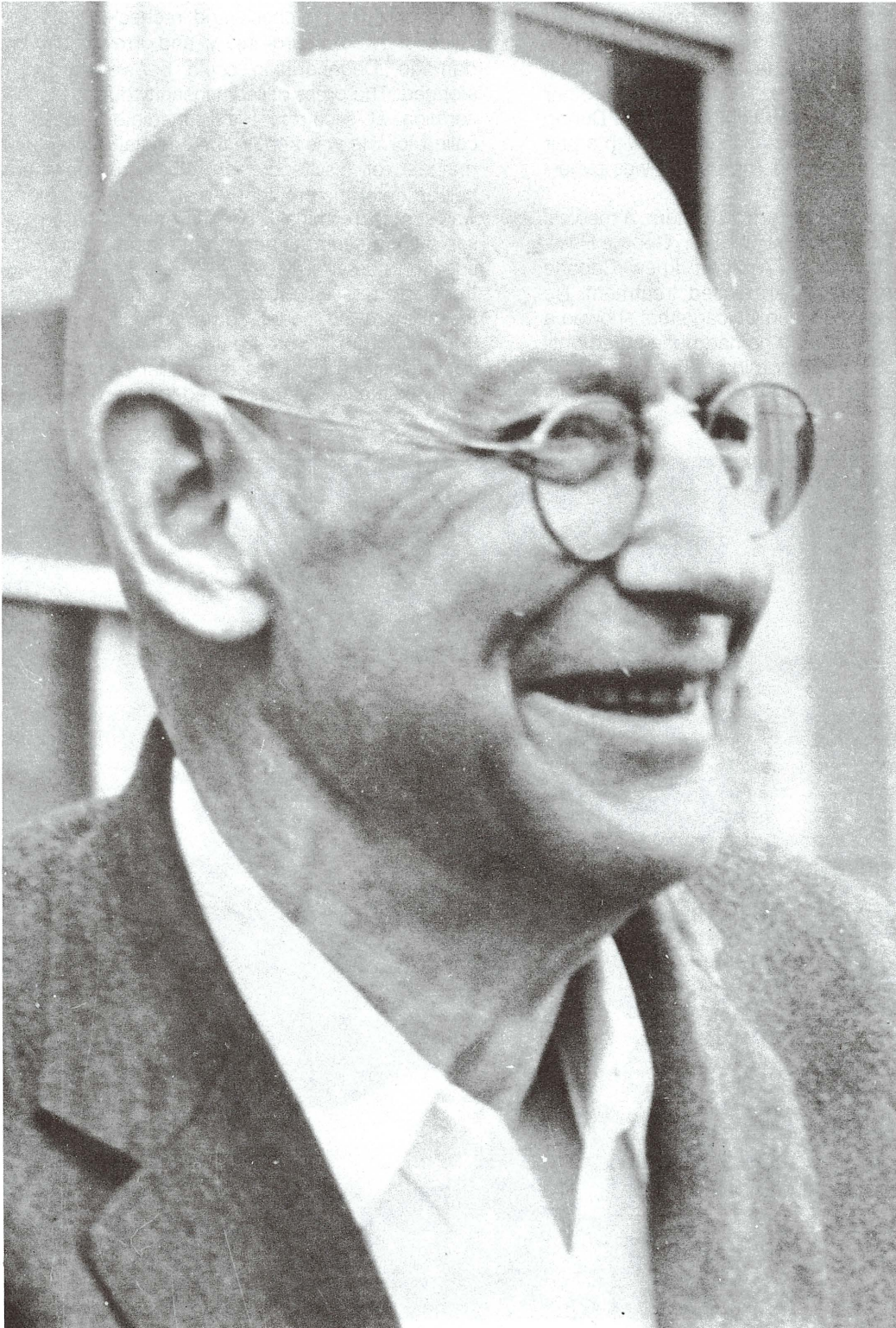
On his induction into the prison system, a medical exam showed Capone had syphilis. Dr. George Hess, the medical examiner on Alcatraz, knew Capone when he was in Atlanta. Al refused treatment. He claimed he had tests done in Chicago that showed a negative result. He believed he had been cured until one day in 1938. On the morning of February 5th of that year Capone began to show signs of confusion.

He started by wearing his Sunday clothes instead of the weekday work uniform. After breakfast he returned to the wrong cell tier. His speech was thick and slurred and his color very pallid. He was taken to the prison hospital above the cell-house where Dr. Hess diagnosed the premonitory signs of syphilis-induced paresis. Capone cooperated on all further treatments, but a check and recheck of his spinal fluids showed neuro injury and irreversible brain damage. Degeneration could be slowed but not stopped. The press called it insanity due to his incarceration at Alcatraz. His immediate release was called for. He was kept in the hospital during the remainder of his tenure on Alcatraz. The therapy helped defer the problem. An examination, before he was sent to Terminal Island in Southern California, to serve out a separate one-year sentence, showed his speech to be adequate and relevant. Al Capone was transferred to Lewisberg prior to his final release. From there he spent some time in a Baltimore hospital, under private treatment for the syphilis degeneration. He lived the remainder of his life at his family estate in Miami and died there on January 25, 1947.



Capone, en route to prison, playing cards with federal marshal

ROBERT STROUD AZ #594





The second name immediately associated with Alcatraz is Robert Stroud, "the Birdman of Alcatraz." His story was reproduced by Hollywood in a much more sympathetic light than this research bore out.

Stroud was living in Juneau, Alaska in 1909, pimping. He shot, killed and robbed a bartender. One of his girls had accused the bartender of welching on a "transaction." Stroud returned to the girl's "crib" and gave her the money. He was sentenced to 12 years at McNeil Island in 1911. There he attacked an orderly without provocation, evidently due to the orderly's report to the authorities that Stroud had demanded narcotics from the infirmary where the orderly worked. He was given an additional six months and transferred to Leavenworth, where in 1916 he stabbed a guard to death in front of 1200 inmate witnesses. After three lengthy trials he was sentenced to death by hanging on April 23, 1920. On April 15, after lobbying on the part of his mother and endless appeals to Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, Stroud was granted a commuted sentence to life imprisonment in isolation. It was there, with time on his hands, that Stroud developed his interest in birds. In the 1920's it was not unusual for a prisoner to have one or two canaries as pets. There was not much academic learning and there were no industries to provide work for the inmates. Stroud eventually accumulated almost 300 birds. He operated a bird breeding business and was given two adjoining cells to accommodate it. There was a theory that Stroud developed his interest in birds when he realized he would be given alcohol for his experiments. His cell was searched and the officials at Leavenworth found over 3½ gallons of 188 proof mash, a still made out of an old hot-plate, pipe and rubber tubing, light bulbs converted into flasks, and a stiletto-like dagger. It was also discovered that Stroud had been smuggling letters out of prison in the bottoms of bird cages.

Stroud was transferred to Alcatraz on December 19, 1942. He had already spent over 33 years behind bars. He had a record of perverse behavior and homosexual/homicidal assaults, so again he was placed in isolation. He began his stay by inciting his neighbors to fight and destroy property. While at Alcatraz, Stroud spent most of his time copying out of technical books, yet it cannot be denied that his works, *Diseases of Canaries* and *Stroud's Digest on the Diseases of Birds* provided an aid to poultrymen and bird breeders.

Stroud consistently expected a full presidential pardon, though few knew why he thought he deserved it. In 1955 the book on his life was published and the movie was begun. The Justice Department refused to recognize the book as accurate. Stroud was in and out of the prison hospital for psychological observation as well as physical problems. By 1959 his numerous medical problems caused officials to transfer him to the Springfield Medical Facility.

In 1963 when it was found that Stroud was going to die, Attorney General Robert Kennedy was given the decision whether to release him for his final days. Kennedy concluded that Robert Stroud was already home; he had been in prison for over 50 years.



GEORGE "MACHINE GUN" KELLY AZ # 117

It has been said that "Machine Gun" Kelly made the ten most wanted list of the F.B.I. because of J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover wanted to gain publicity for the Bureau to let the public know of its role in suppressing crime. Kelly was a college-educated man from a wealthy Memphis family. There can be no denying that he received attention from the press and gained notoriety through his criminal activities.

He started as a bootlegger in the 20's, working for a small-time gangster in Memphis. The easy money impressed his girlfriend. She was the one who influenced him to go for more lucrative funds in the early 30's, through bank robbery. At this point in his career he had done time in Oklahoma, Santa Fe and Leavenworth.

In July of 1933 Kelly and Albert Bates, a burglar, bank robber and safe cracker, stepped into the Oklahoma home of Charles Urschel. The Urschels were playing bridge that night with Mr. and Mrs. Walter Jarrett. Kelly, holding his famed machine gun, and Bates, wielding a pistol, coerced both men into getting into their car. They warned the women not to call the police. They later dropped Jarrett off and continued, with Urschel, on to Texas.

A ransom note was delivered. The kidnappers were paid \$200,000 in a specific denomination of bills. Mr. Urschel, on his release, turned out to have a precise memory. Through his identification of farm-associated sounds and smells, air traffic patterns and weather variations during his nine days of captivity,





the F.B.I. was able to isolate the town of Paradise, Texas, as the most likely area in which he had been held. By a cross-checking of suspects it was found that Kelly's in-laws had a farm in that area.

The kidnappers were traced through 16 different states, and all were eventually apprehended in different locations. Kelly was caught in Memphis, Bates in Denver, and Harvey Bailey, who joined the gang after the kidnapping, was caught in Texas. Of those actually involved in the crime, six life sentences were given, including those of Bates, Bailey and "Machine Gun" Kelly.

On September 4, 1934, all three were transferred from Leavenworth to Alcatraz. Bates took some time adjusting but eventually held his yard job up to the time of his death in the Alcatraz hospital of heart disease on July 4, 1948. Bailey, an excellent mechanic, took a job in the furniture shop and caused no problems. Kelly was no real problem either. He liked the notoriety and missed his

freedom. There is a story told by one of the guards, of an incident that reportedly changed Kelly's attitude.

There had been a hunger strike in which Kelly was involved. The guard on the floor, who asked to remain nameless, happened to be eating a salami sandwich while walking by Kelly's cell. The infamous gangster must have been feeling irate, as he told the guard, "In my heyday that would be a thick steak and I'd be surrounded by women. I had it all." The guard stopped to listen, then smiling at Kelly he threw the sandwich on the floor. "You know, Kelly, I've got a date tonight with a great little redhead. We're going to an Italian restaurant in North Beach, and then out on the town. I'm not rich and I'm not a big man but I sure as hell won't be here tonight." Evidently it worked, as Kelly's bravado was missing for the rest of his stay at Alcatraz.

George "Machine Gun" Kelly died of a heart attack while awaiting parole at Leavenworth.

ALVIN KARPIS AZ #325

Alvin Karpowicz was born in Montreal, Canada in 1908. He was nicknamed "Creepy" by the same agency that gave him the honor of being "Public Enemy Number One" — the F.B.I. He had grown up in Topeka, Kansas (an elementary teacher there changed his name to Alvin Karpis) and it was there he embarked on a spree of petty burglaries. He stole his first gun at the age of ten. At eighteen, Karpis and an accomplice, Lawrence Devol, broke from a ten-year sentence at a Kansas reformatory. They were

**IDENTIFICATION
ORDER NO. 1218**
March 22, 1934.

**DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**
WASHINGTON, D. C.

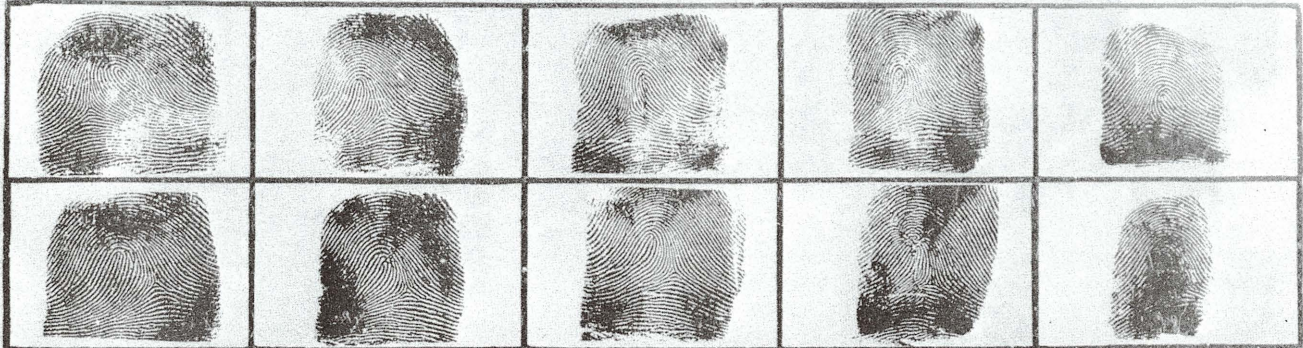
Fingerprint Classification

13 1 Rr 5
1 U 7

WANTED

ALVIN KARPIS, with aliases,
A. CARTER, RAYMOND HADLEY, GEORGE HALLER, ALVIN KORPIS,
EARL PEEL, GEORGE DUNN, R. E. HAMILTON, RAY HUNTER.

KIDNAPING



DESCRIPTION

Age, 25 years (1934); Height, 5 feet, 9-3/4 inches; Weight, 130 pounds; Build, slender; Hair, brown; Eyes, blue; Complexion, fair; Marks, 1 inch cut scar lower knuckle left index finger.

Photograph taken May 19, 1930.



CRIMINAL RECORD

As Alvin Karpis, #7071, received State Industrial Reformatory, Hutchinson, Kansas, February 25, 1926; crime, burglary-2nd degree; sentence, 10 years; escaped March 9, 1929; returned March 25, 1930.

As Raymond Hadley, #17902, arrested Police Department, Kansas City, Missouri, March 23, 1930; charge, larceny-auto and safe blower; released to State Industrial Reformatory, Hutchinson, Kansas, as an escape.

As Alvin Karpis, #1539, received State Penitentiary, Lansing, Kansas, May 19, 1930 - transferred from State Industrial Reformatory; crime, burglary-2nd degree; sentence, 5 to 10 years.

As George Haller, #8008, arrested Police Department, Tulsa, Oklahoma, June 10, 1931; charge, investigation-burglary; delivered Police Department, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

As A. Korpis, #1609, arrested Police Department, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, June 10, 1931; charge, burglary; sentenced September 11, 1931, 4 years, State Penitentiary, McAlester, Oklahoma; paroled.

Alvin Karpis

Alvin Karpis is wanted for questioning in connection with the kidnaping of Edward G. Bremer at St. Paul, Minnesota, on January 17, 1934.

Law enforcement agencies kindly transmit any additional information or criminal record to the nearest office of the Division of Investigation, U. S. Department of Justice.

If apprehended, please notify the Director, Division of Investigation, U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, D. C.; or the Special Agent in Charge of the office of the Division of Investigation listed on the back hereof which is nearest your city.

(over)

Issued by: J. EDGAR HOOVER, DIRECTOR.

recaptured in the spring of 1929 in Kansas City. They were subsequently sentenced to the Kansas State Penitentiary. Karpis worked in the prison coal mines until his release in 1931.

It was in the penitentiary that Alvin met Freddie Barker, one of the Barker clan. The two started a rampage of robbing stores, warehouses and banks throughout the midwest. The gang orchestrated and completed two kidnappings. The first victim was St. Paul's William Hamm Jr., the bachelor president of Hamm's Brewing Co. The plan worked and the gang netted \$100,000 in ransom. The second also took place in St. Paul, in 1934. The victim, Edward Bremmer, was the president of a local bank. The \$200,000 ransom was paid, but this time the bills were marked. Karpis and his gang had to scramble to stay ahead of the F.B.I. They managed to stay alive and pull off a few more crimes.

On May 1, 1936 Karpis and Fred Hunter, his partner, tried to drive out of New Orleans when a .351 automatic rifle appeared at Karpis' temple. Two F.B.I. agents sprawled across the hood of his car, their automatic weapons pointed between Alvin's eyes. Having heard about the violent deaths of his friends Freddie and Ma Barker, Pretty Boy Floyd, John Dillinger and Baby Face Nelson, Karpis decided to surrender. As he was led to an F.B.I. vehicle, surrounded by agents, J. Edgar Hoover stepped out from behind the human wall. Photographers staged "Hoover Captures Karpis" on the streets of New Orleans.

Karpis was taken to Minnesota for questioning on the Hamm case (even though the F.B.I. had tried to prosecute at least two other gangs for the same crime). He was sentenced to twenty years, and despite the policy of its formation, the district attorney specifically asked that Karpis serve his time at Alcatraz. On August 6, 1936, Public Enemy #1, "Creepy" Karpis became AZ-325.

James Johnston described Karpis as a slight, hardened criminal, who despite repeated fights with other inmates, tried to serve his time as quietly as possible. There were at least two fights, early on in Karpis' Alcatraz history, though the underlying reasons are disputed.

"Doc" Barker and "Machine Gun" Kelly both greeted Karpis on his arrival at Alcatraz. They warned him of some of the problems he might face there. They eventually counselled Karpis into changing his job from the laundry into the kitchens, but not until Karpis collaborated with Barker on several escape plans.

While working in the laundry, Karpis and Harvey Bailey planned an escape from the clothing factory while Ralph Roe, Theodore Cole and "Doc" Barker planned an escape from the mat shop below. The two groups agreed that the first to be ready would go. In mid-December of 1937 Cole, Roe and Barker decided only two could go. Barker bowed out and joined Karpis and Bailey at a second-story window. They watched as Cole and Roe worked their way out of the building and into the water. Bailey and Barker

moved from the window to check on the guard making his rounds. Karpis watched Cole and Roe make their way into the unusually swift currents of the bay. Suddenly the 5-gallon can which Roe was using as a float, shot straight up into the air. Roe was sucked beneath the surface. Cole was carried out by the rapid current to somewhat the same point and met the same fate, according to Karpis. He then decided never to attempt to escape from the prison by water.

Karpis claimed he was persecuted in Alcatraz by both the F.B.I. and the various wardens. Karpis was still a Canadian citizen, and therefore subject to deportation.

It was only when Madigan became warden that things started to change. Madigan had worked his way up through the ranks and was highly regarded by both convicts and guards. He was a fair man who knew the inner workings of Alcatraz, so when he



became warden in 1956, Alcatraz underwent a modernization. Radio headsets were installed and the parole committee began to work on the "old timers' cases. In 1948 Madigan put together a proposal to parole Karpis. It was accepted. Karpis was sent to Leavenworth to serve his final year. Warden Aiken, at Leavenworth, felt he had enough trouble without Karpis, and so orchestrated Karpis' return to Alcatraz on a false "escape" charge.

Karpis had a friend in Madigan, so when the warden's transfer was announced, Karpis thought it was his doom to be in Alcatraz. The basic problem was that no other warden at any institution would accept Karpis. Madigan was to be transferred to McNeil Island. He got Karpis another parole opportunity, this time at McNeil. Madigan guaranteed Karpis' good behavior. Surviving his final year at McNeil without incident, Karpis was released and deported to Canada. He died in 1979.

ROY GARDNER AZ # 110



On September 4, 1932, in the first group of prisoners transferred into Alcatraz from Leavenworth, a 50-year-old convict was brought forward for identification. In reviewing Roy Gardner's prior history, and being somewhat familiar with it from his days at San Quentin, Warden Johnston noted phrases like "hatred of authority . . . dangerous . . . aggressive . . . antagonistic attitude toward prison officers." Trouble. Here stood the last of the great train robbers, a daring jewel thief and a slippery escape artist of incredible persistence.

His official record dates back to 1902 when he was sentenced to two years in a state reformatory for burglary. Roy maintained that he escaped from the reformatory in Missouri on his second attempt, but having nowhere to go he returned. On his release he robbed a jewelry store in Denver, of a tray of rings. He used this to finance his journey to San Francisco. After a brief term in the army (he deserted after being caught cheating while gambling) he fled to Mexico and worked as a miner. In 1909 he was accused of gun-running for the Mexican revolutionists. Gardner overpowered his guard while he was being taken to the firing squad, evaded the other sentries and made his way back to the U.S.

On December 20, 1910, Roy Gardner strolled into a San Francisco jewelry store on Market Street. He asked to see some diamond rings. Claiming to be unable to make up his mind, he left the store. He returned two days later and was shown the same tray of rings. He grabbed the tray and raced through the crowded store, zigzagged through several other stores with the 23 rings, and was finally caught on Powell Street. In 1911 he began serving a 5-year sentence for robbery in San Quentin. He managed to keep "clean" and was paroled in 1913. He worked the copper mines of California during his parole, then moved on to the shipyards and iron works. In 1920 he began his "front page" career.

On April 28th of that year Gardner was arrested for the holdup and robbery of a San Diego mail messenger. He was seen burying the mail sack containing \$75,000. Gardner pleaded guilty and on May 24th he was sentenced to 25 years at McNeil Island Federal Penitentiary in Washington. On June 7th, two federal marshals boarded a train with Gardner for the trip to Washington. When the train neared Portland, Gardner grabbed the gun of one of the marshals and at gunpoint had the other unlock his handcuffs and leg irons. He then cuffed the marshals to a pipe, turned off the lights, and stepped off the train in Portland.

On May 20, 1921, Gardner held up a Roseville, California, postal clerk, taking \$55,000. A couple of days later he duplicated the robbery, this time getting \$175,000. On May 23rd, Gardner was arrested, sitting in a poker game, and again pleaded guilty. He was given a 25-year term, again at McNeil. With a detailed list of methods for transport, two experienced deputies boarded a train with Gardner, headed for Washington. This time Gardner waited until the train was outside of Portland and crossing the Washington state line, then produced a small pistol he had taped to his body. Following somewhat the same scenario, he and another prisoner jumped from the train. Gardner was caught five days later. It took three attempts, but Gardner was finally delivered to McNeil. He swore he would not be held for long.

On September 5, 1921, all work was suspended at McNeil for Labor Day festivities. During an inmate baseball game Gardner was in the rooting section. The game was close and prisoner and guard attention was held by the contest. Gardner and two others broke from the field and ran for the fence. One of the two cohorts was killed in the gunfire, the other felled by a shot in the leg, but Gardner made it over the fence to the bay. He swam to freedom and made good his boast.

For several months Gardner sent letters documenting his prior exploits, to a San Francisco reporter who published the biography. On Novem-

ber 15, 1921, Gardner made front page news again. This time he was in Phoenix, Arizona. He entered a mail car and held a gun on mail clerk Herman Inderlied. The clerk would not submit to the robbery. He floored Gardner and held him for the authorities. Later Gardner explained why he didn't shoot the clerk: "That mail clerk was 100% man and I was just a cheap crook. The result was inevitable." This time the guilty plea brought a concurrent sentence with his others, and he was sent to Leavenworth, Kansas.

Gardner was a headache at Leavenworth, making life miserable for all. He claimed an old skull fracture had caused excessive pressure on his brain, thus causing his criminal behavior. When the chief physician disagreed and declined to operate, Gardner began a tirade of threats, strikes and antagonism. As a result, he was watched and spent the first few years in isolation.

In 1925 he was transferred to Atlanta. There he tried to tunnel under the wall. In 1928 he and four others tried a break over the wall. When that failed they tried to force a guard at gun point to pass them through the gates, but they found a locked gate and a heavily armed guard waiting for them. On surrendering, Gardner threatened to commit suicide. It was believed he wanted to be transferred to a mental hospital where there would be a better chance of escape. He was sent to a Washington, D.C. hospital for treatment. Nothing was found and he was taken back to Leavenworth.

While he was sulking there in 1930, a thought struck Gardner. All of his tantrums and bravado had cost him his "good conduct" credit. He was lengthening his residence in the federal penal system with each outburst. He then changed his behavior pattern. He worked in the shops and kept to himself. This is how Roy Gardner came to Alcatraz.

Warden Johnston calculated carefully. He noted that Gardner always worked alone and though accompanied by other escapees, had a record of self-sufficiency. For the periods of work, he was remarkably responsible and skillful, but only when he was alone.

During the initial interview of the new prisoners, Roy Gardner told Johnston, "I'm one man who wanted to come to Alcatraz. I've had enough trouble." He was assigned to work in the mat shop. The job required reading blueprints, measuring and assembling materials, and finishing them to pass inspection by the navy.

Gardner's work was matched by his cooperation. Warden Johnston had taken special interest in his ability to understand himself. In 1936, Gardner was transferred back to Leavenworth. He had one more year prior to parole. That last year Johnston worked toward getting Gardner a job on his release. In 1938 Gardner went to work on a farm owned by the reporter that published his story. The farm didn't last long. Gardner found himself back in San Francisco where he authored his life story. A local paper serialized it. He put together a "crime doesn't pay" show at the San Francisco Exposition. That also did poorly.

On January 10, 1940, Roy Gardner ended his life in a San Francisco hotel room. He packed his suitcase, leaving 50¢ to cover costs of their removal. He even placed a note on the door warning the maid not to come in. The note read, "Do not open this door — POISON GAS — call police." He sent a letter to the San Francisco newspapers, "I am old and tired and don't care to continue the struggle. Please let me down as light as possible." Then he placed a towel over his head, dropped cyanide tablets into a glass of acid, and inhaled the lethal gas. He had \$3.69 among his effects.



Roy Gardner, third from left, with U.S. marshal Dilliam, far left

1
April 27, 1936

The Escape Attempts

The first man to attempt the reportedly impossible escape from Alcatraz was allegedly insane (see letter, page 25). Be that as it may, he fell into line with the prototype of the escapee that Warden Johnston feared the most, the "lone wolf."

Joseph Bowers, a powerfully built 40-year-old, was serving a 25-year sentence for robbing a store of \$16.63! It was his misfortune to pull the job because the store also housed the local post office, making it a federal offense. Immigration officials were also holding a warrant for his deportation upon his release. Warden Johnston categorized Bowers as a "weak-minded man with a strong back, who would get peace of mind by exercising his body."

He was assigned the job of caring for the incinerator on the island's west-side lower level. The area

was ringed with a mesh wire fence.

On the morning of the 27th of April, officer Chandler was on duty in the road tower. He reported that at about 11:00 a.m. he was surprised to note Bowers hanging at the top of the fence. Chandler yelled at Bowers several times, telling him to stop. When Bowers continued over the top, Chandler fired two warning shots below him. Chandler claims he aimed his third shot at Bowers' legs, but the subsequent medical exam showed he was shot in the side.

This act must have been one of desperate impulse. The fence looked over a 60-foot drop to a concrete embankment. Bowers evidently slackened his grip when the bullet hit. He lost his life when his body met the land below. It is chronicled as the first violent death at Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary.



Joseph Bowers

San francisco news
San francisco Cal

Please investigate criminal cruelty practices on prisoners at Alcatraz Prison. A few of the cases are (1) Edgar Lewis, age 28, serving 3 yrs sentence, kept in dungeon for a total of more than 6 wks, starved, shot in face with gas gun, beaten over head with clubs by three guards (names will be given to investigating committee). He is now insane and is kept in a cage in the hospital. No hope for his recovery. His family lives at Los Banos, Calif. They don't know about it yet. The warden naturally won't give out information that will hang himself, but if an investigation is made and the inmates are questioned you will get the evidence. Another case is Jos. Bowers also insane from same cause, but not as bad condition as Lewis. James Grave is also insane and is under mental observation. John Studeg is

2 December 16th, 1937

The second attempt may have been the only successful escape, although the authorities claim such would be miraculous. Ralph Roe and Theodore Cole were friends at Leavenworth and the Oklahoma Penitentiary before they were transferred to Alcatraz in 1935. Both had tried numerous escapes in the previous incarcerations.

Theodore Cole, a 25-year-old small, furtive man, was serving a 50-year sentence, convicted for the kidnapping of James Rutherford in Oklahoma in 1934. At the time of the kidnapping, Cole was an escapee from McAlester Penitentiary! At the age of 17 he was facing a 15-year jail sentence. He was smuggled out of McAlester in a laundry bag while awaiting prosecution for the murder of his cell-mate. Warden Johnston described Cole as "daring and cunning, hard as nails and willing to take chances."

Ralph Roe was 37 when he found himself serving a 99-year sentence for bank robbery. He had a long record, with a prison career to match, checkered with escape attempts. He was big (6 feet, 170 pounds) and dangerous.

At one o'clock on the afternoon of December 16th, the officer in charge of several groups checked Cole and Roe into the mat shop. The officer continued on to the machine shop as per his appointed rounds. He returned to the mat shop and found an empty room with a hole in a bayside window.

It was a cold and extremely foggy day, even for San Francisco. Bay traffic was at a near standstill due to the zero visibility. The tower guards could find no sign of Cole or Roe with their binoculars. There were no boats in sight and watch reports verified that no boats had been in the vicinity for hours.



Ralph Roe



Theodore Cole

On investigation, the path of the break was found. Cole and Roe had sawed through the shop window bars and squeezed through the small opening. With a stillson wrench they broke the gate in the fence below. They evidently used the gate as a means to reach the ledge 20 feet below, which was the area used as a dump for the unusable parts of rubber tires. The old rubber would have helped break the fall. From there the only obstacle was the bay.

The prison launch circled the area close to the island, and a San Francisco Police boat covered a wider perimeter. Ferry boat crews were notified to be on the alert. The Coast Guard provided several vessels. An "all points" bulletin was issued and later became a nationwide alert. The police from all areas surrounding the bay were stationed at various locations throughout the night. The tides were charted at minus 8 mph; it was a strong tide that pulled directly out to the ocean.

The prison officials believe that Cole and Roe made it to the water, only to fall victim to the chill and violent tides. It is a fact that neither Cole nor Roe were ever found. To this day they are listed as unaccounted for.

3
May 23rd, 1938

Brutality was the hallmark of the third attempt. "Tex" Lucas, a 25-year-old bank robber from Texas serving a 30-year sentence, Whitney Franklin, also serving 30 years, and Thomas Limmerick, a kidnapper with a life sentence, all worked in the wood shop. On the afternoon of May 23rd, they left work with a hammer, lead weights and pieces of iron. They found their way to Royal C. Cline, who was the custodial officer armed only with a gas billy. One of the three swung the hammer down on Cline's head. They made their way up to the roof armed with the pieces of iron. They threw the iron at the windows of the tower. They had intended to get at the tower guard and gain his gun. Officer Stites in the tower reacted immediately and opened fire. Stites hit Limmerick in the head and Franklin in the shoulder. Lucas hid but soon surrendered. Limmerick died that night and officer Cline died the following day, leaving a wife and four daughters. Franklin and Lucas went to trial for first degree murder in the death of Cline. They were both given life sentences.



Thomas Limmerick



James Lucas

Rufus Franklin

4

January 13th, 1939

Arthur "Doc" Barker, the youngest son in the Barker gang, was 38 years old and serving a life sentence for kidnapping on January 13, 1939. He and four others, Rufus McCain, a bank robber serving 99 years; post office robber William Martin; Henri Young, serving 20 years for robbery; and Dale Stamphill, also serving life for kidnapping, were all trouble. Barker, while small in stature, was constantly in fights with both guards and inmates. They had all led a workshop strike in September of 1937. They were striking for more tolerable conditions. What they got was a move into the isolation cells of D-block.

D-block was one of the few remaining areas that were not remodeled after the Bureau of Prisons assumed control. The cell bars of the five adjoining cells were of the flat, soft iron type used by the army. It took months for the five to saw through the bars with a makeshift abrasive saw. They managed to cover their work as they progressed. D-block also had a blind outside window. The windows did, however, have tool-proof bars. The five had gotten around that problem by inventing a makeshift bar spreader. With the means for an escape they waited for the right time.

The pre-dawn hours of the 13th found the island wrapped in San Francisco's finest fog. Within half an hour the empty cells were found and the alarm went out. Searchlights found them on the rocky shore of a cove, nearly nude. They were using their clothes to tie driftwood together for a raft. Martin had been badly bruised making the jump from the windows of D-block. When the order came to stop he was the first to fall among the rocks. Two tried to make the bay, but the guards opened fire and hit Stamphill in the legs and Barker in the legs and head. Young and McCain were captured and sent back to solitary. "Doc" Barker died on a stretcher in the prison. Stamphill was treated for the leg wound and Martin was treated several cuts and bruises as well as exposure.

McCain and Young spent nearly 22 months in

solitary, gaining their return to "normal" prison life in November of 1940. Both were assigned to work in the tailor shop. In early December, Young fatally stabbed McCain.



Arthur "Doc" Barker

During the trial for McCain's murder, Young's lawyers took an unusual defense. They held that, having been in isolation from 1937 to 1940, Young could not be held responsible for his actions. He was the product of overly strict and rigid discipline and had become a desperate, tormented man near insanity. Warden Johnston was called to explain the regimen of the prison. Inmates were called to describe treatment and/or abuse. Testimony was heard describing rational convicts become raving lunatics. The indictment of Alcatraz brought in a manslaughter verdict from the jury. It resulted in three additional years for Young. It also brought an investigation by the Bureau of Prisons. The result was the allocation of funds to refurbish D-block. No evidence of brutality or improper conduct was reported by the investigation.



William Martin



Rufus McCain

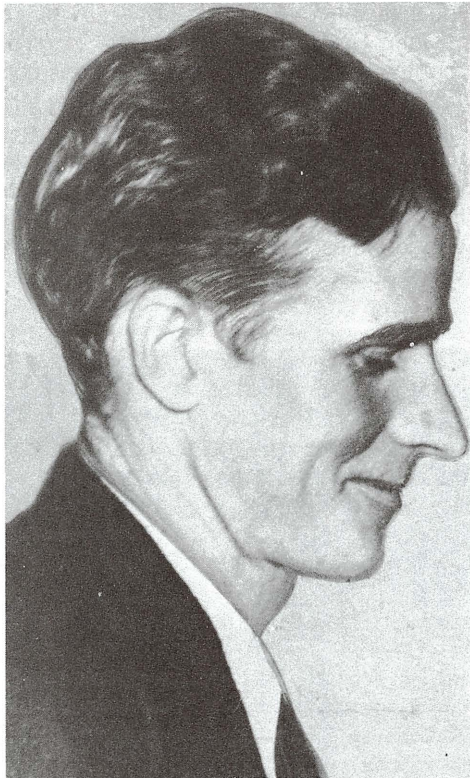


Dale Stamphill



Henri Young

5
May 21st, 1941



Lloyd Barkdoll

Joseph Cretzer and Arnold Kyle were brothers-in-law with long criminal records, from McNeil Island. They joined Lloyd Barkdoll and Sam Shockley for a combined escape attempt. All four were serving life sentences. They worked together in the mat shop. There they each grabbed a guard and one by one began to saw through the steel window bars.

They worked on the bars for an hour with no luck. One of the captured guards reminded the cons of the count, that was due from the mat shop, to be reported to the officials. If no count was sent the alarm would surely be sounded.

Once convinced they couldn't make it, all four surrendered. They were each placed in solitary confinement for indefinite periods.



Joseph P. Cretzer



Arnold T. Kyle



Sam Shockley

6 September 15th, 1941

John Bayless was a 27-year-old bank robber serving 25 years. He was working the garbage detail when he attempted his one-man escape. A guard spotted him in the water just before he began to swim. He was captured and brought back. He had been cut by the rocks on the shore, and was sick from the salt water.

John Bayless was not a man to give up. A few months later he filed a writ of habeas corpus in San Francisco. He claimed he had not been represented by legal counsel during his conviction. Just before the judge entered the courtroom, Bayless leaped over the railing and headed for the back door. He was met by a deputy and decked by a blow to the face. So ended the escape attempts of John Bayless, with five years added to his sentence.

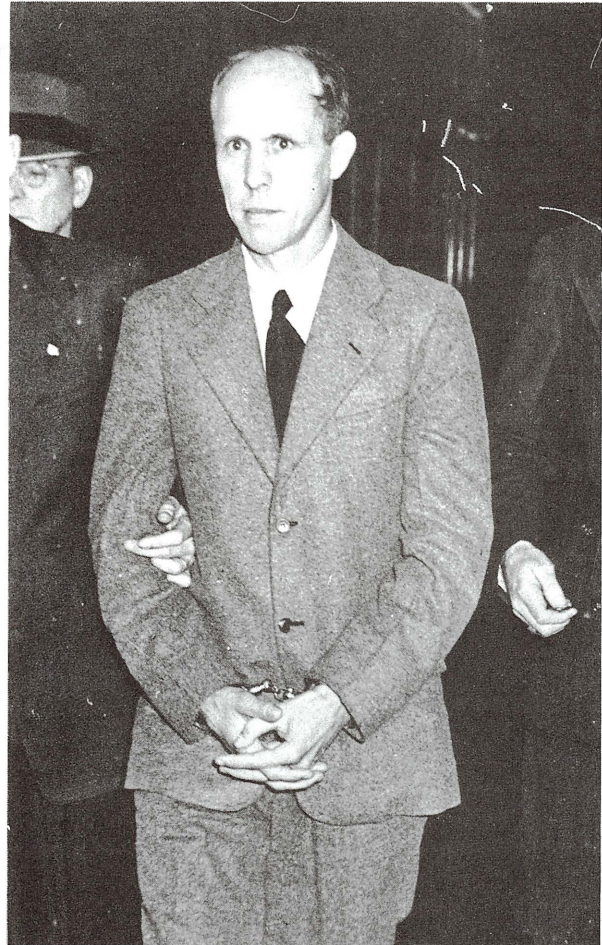


John R. Bayless

7 April 14th, 1943

On the morning of April 14, Floyd Hamilton, Harold Brest, Fred Hunter and James Boarman were manufacturing concrete blocks in the industrial area of the west end of the island. Armed with home-made knives, they jumped the detail officer when he entered a nearby shop. The four then tied and gagged him. The captain of the guards appeared on his routine rounds, and met a similar fate. They broke through the rear window of the shop, out of sight of the gun tower, and dropped to the ground below. About the same time, one of the gagged officers managed to free himself. He sounded the alarm to alert the other guards to the escape attempt.

Evidently the plan had been to use large cans as floats, as two of these were found by the window with stolen army uniforms stuffed inside. By the time the four made it to the water, the tower guards had spotted them. Rifle fire struck Hamilton when he was 30 yards out. Boarman was hit in the head and Brest held him afloat until the prison launch appeared. When Brest let go, Boarman sank, as had Hamilton. Brest, a Pennsylvania bank robber, was captured in the water. Fred Hunter, a kidnapper with the Alvin Karpis gang, was found hiding in a cave and was returned to his cell. Warden Johnston announced the deaths of James Boarman, a 24-year-old bank robber, and Floyd Hamilton, who was once the F.B.I.'s Public Enemy #1, while with the Bonnie Parker/Clyde Barrow gang. Two days later Hamilton was found hiding in the industrial building. He had swum back to shore and hidden in the same cave as Hunter. Eventually, he retraced his escape route back into the prison. Hamilton was taken to the prison hospital for much needed attention. He had several hundred cuts and bruises from his two days of exposure to the changing tides and swells. He was tossed back and forth against the rocky shoreline that surrounded Alcatraz. He was lucky to make it back alive.



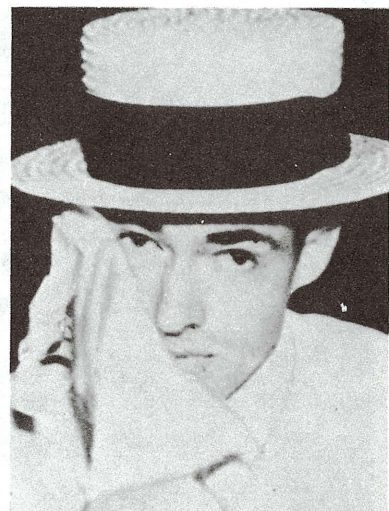
Floyd Hamilton



James Boarman



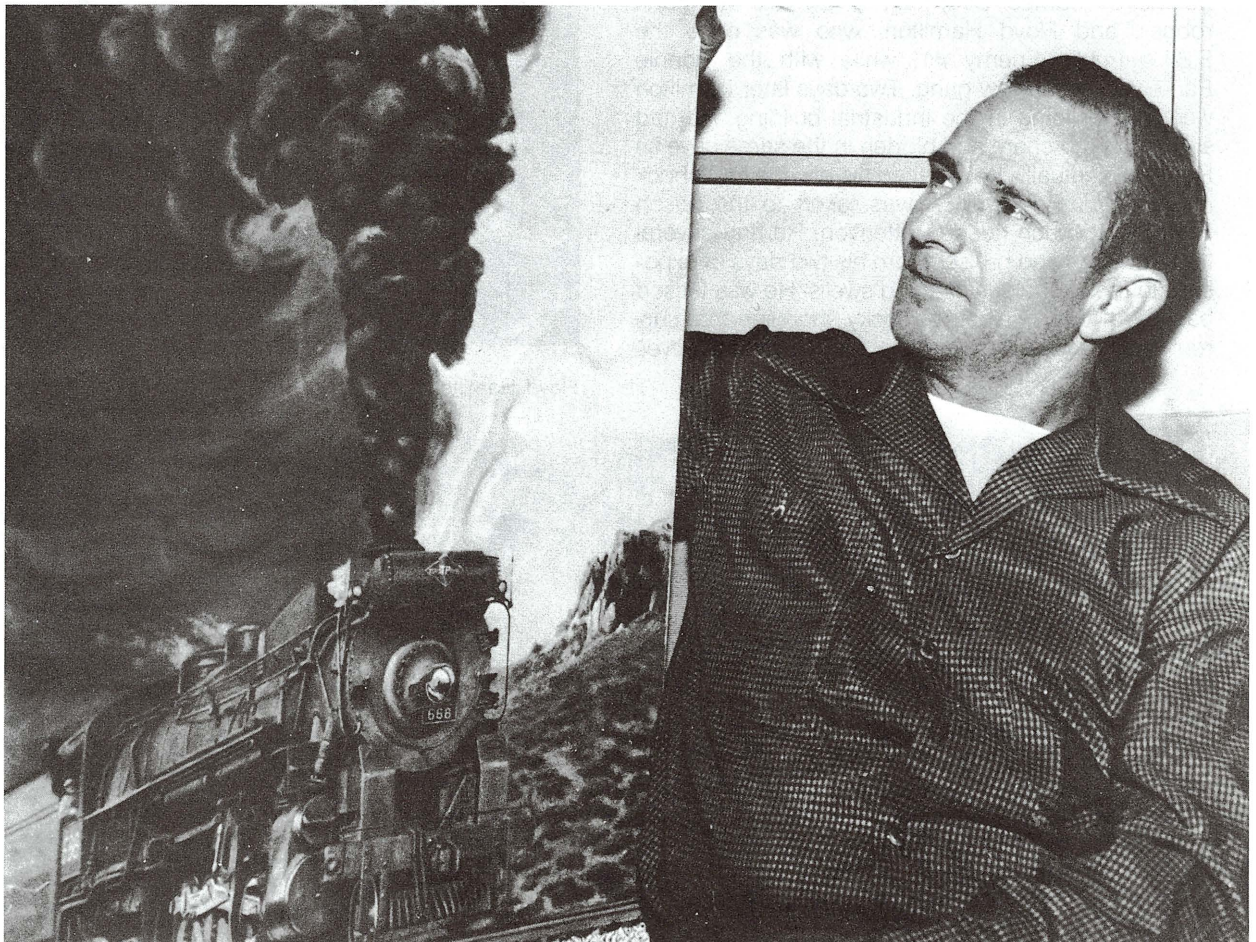
Harold Brest



Fred Hunter

8 August 7th, 1943

Wartime meant an excess of work for the prisoners, and a cutback on officers on Alcatraz. A custodial officer, making his rounds in the prison laundry, noted the absence of Huron "Ted" Walters. Walters was serving 30 years for bank robbery. He was found dressed only in his shorts, ready to launch himself into the bay. He had tied two large cans around his waist for buoyancy. Bruised and bleeding, he was trying to hide between two large rocks. Walters had sneaked out of the laundry and climbed the perimeter fence. He fell over the top and landed on some sharp rocks. He reportedly waited at the water's edge for nearly an hour. Ted Walters was unable to overcome the dreadfully cold waters that are San Francisco Bay.



Ted Walters

John Giles, serving 25 years for a postal robbery, had been on Alcatraz for 10 years. For the past eight years he had been working on the docks. During that period he had managed to gradually collect an entire army uniform . . . down to the dog tags. His job was to load and unload army laundry which was done by the prison shops. The army's launch routinely stopped at Alcatraz between Fort Mason and Angel Island. On the morning of his escape attempt, he crept behind a building and changed into his borrowed duds. He then pulled his prison coveralls over the uniform. As the boat appeared, before docking, he was counted in the head count. When the officer turned away to handle the gangplank, Giles dropped below the wharf, pulled off his coveralls and jumped aboard the boat.

9 July 31st, 1945

Giles had no idea of the precautionary headcount that would take place aboard the launch after it left the island. The count on the dock was also irregular. Assistant Warden Miller took a small speedboat and was there to meet Giles upon his arrival at Angel Island. For Giles the cruise across the bay got him five more years.

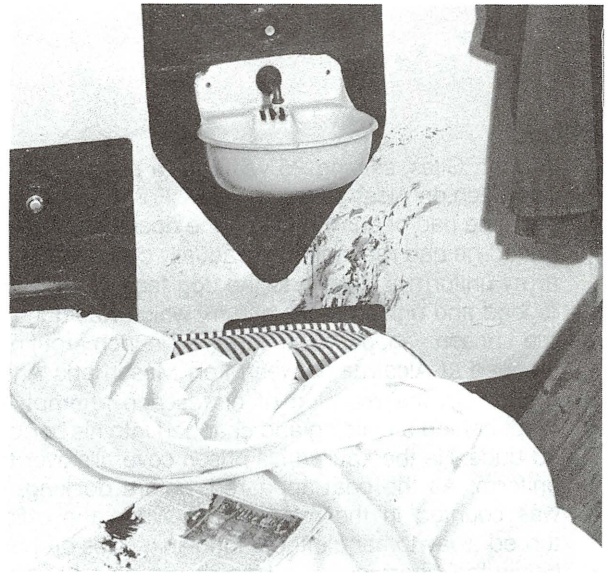


John Giles

10 May 2nd, 1946

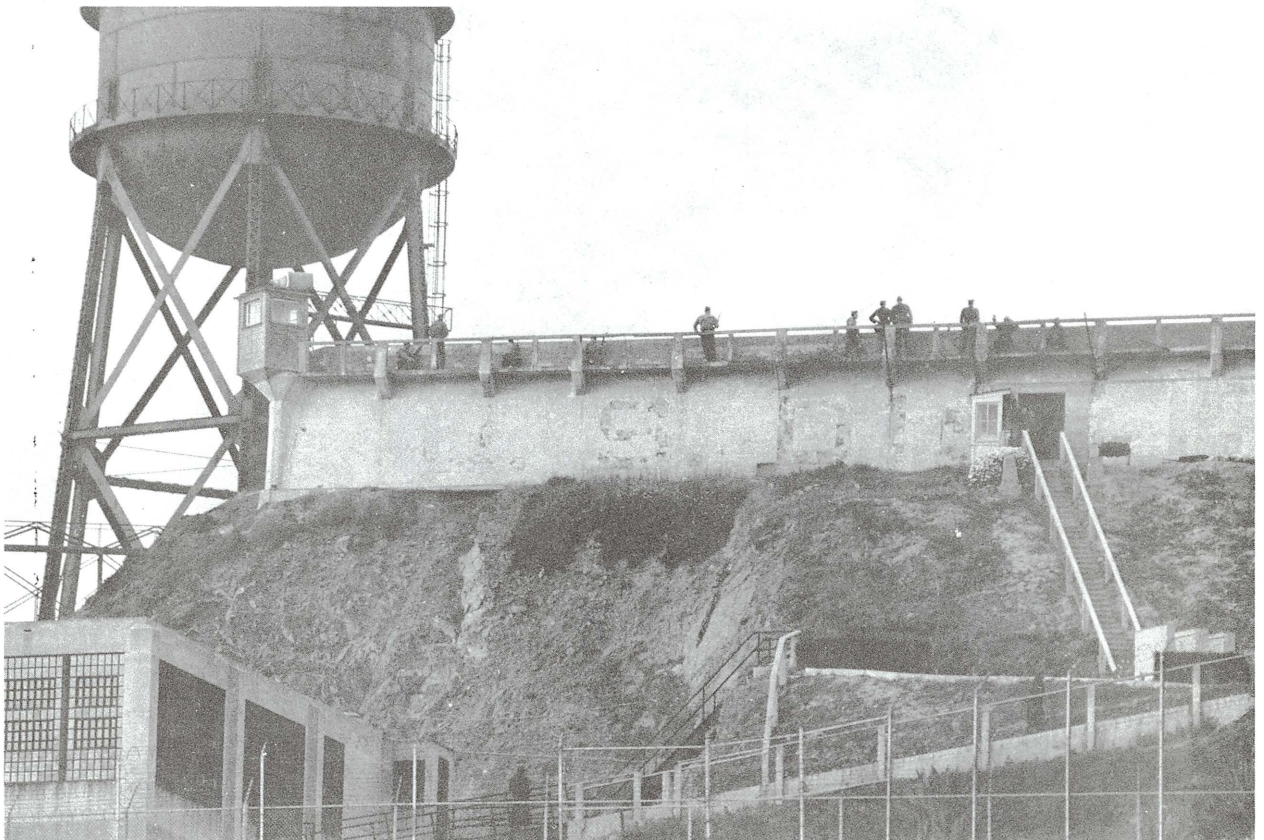
The bloodiest escape attempt came on Thursday, May 2, 1946. The thwarted attempt resulted in a three-day siege as the escapees released the population and held the building. Two officers died, as well as three prisoners. Seventeen guards and one prisoner were wounded. Eventually two more convicts would be executed for their part in the escape attempt. The U.S. Army supplied armament, the Marines were called in, and back-up guards were sent in from other prisons.

Bernard Coy, a Kentucky bank robber, is credited with putting the initial plan together. Coy was a cold-blooded man who at his sentencing proclaimed no prison would hold him, and murder meant nothing. A key part of the plan was the ruse supplied by Marvin Hubbard, an escape-prone gunman. Hubbard feigned illness while working in the kitchen. Joseph Cretzer, a ruthless killer, was awaiting the turn of events in his cell. Sam Shockley, a kidnapper, bank robber and escape artist, was also critical to the plan. He operated as a diversion from his cell in D-block.



Cell where hostages were held during the '46 riot

At approximately 1:40 on the afternoon of May 2nd, Coy was mopping and washing the cellhouse floors. He was out of his cell on work detail. Officer William Miller, unarmed, was the only guard on the main cellhouse floor. The only armed officer was Dean Burch. Burch was working from the caged west gun gallery. The gun gallery had been modified in the 1940 remodeling, allowing the overseeing of B, C and isolation D-blocks. As the noon meal had been served and most prisoners had just returned to their jobs, the main cellhouse was relatively empty.



Marines guarding non-rioting prisoners in recreation yard



Clarence Carnes



Bernard Paul Coy



Joe Cretzer

Coy had stationed himself in such a way as to be able to anticipate Hubbard's approach from the kitchen. When Hubbard appeared at the door to the cellblocks and officer Miller began to unlock the door, Coy tapped a signal to D-block. Shockley, in D-block, began a disturbance attracting the attention of officer Corwin, who then requested officer Burch to oversee D-block. As Miller opened the door to allow Hubbard into the cellblock, Coy jumped him from behind. Hubbard had carried in a carving knife from the kitchen but they didn't need it. They tied Miller up, took his keys and threw him into a cell in C-block. The point in overpowering Miller was to get to the gun gallery. The plan had called for Coy to release several other inmates, including Joseph Cretzer, Miran Thompson and Clarence Carnes (the youngest inmate ever sent to Alcatraz). The idea was to gain the firearms from Burch, the gun gallery guard, release the prisoner population into the yard, storm the guard towers and catwalks, and "take" Alcatraz.

Though Miller was beaten and tied, the keys Coy and Hubbard took from him did not include the key to the yard. Miller managed to hide the critical key in the cell toilet. With the keys they did have, Hubbard

released Carnes and Cretzer. Meanwhile Coy climbed the cage to the gun gallery, a three-story climb. He had greased his body and had a homemade tool made of pliers and toilet fittings. He managed to spread the curved bars of the gun gallery, and drop over. Quietly working his way to the connecting door, Coy waited for Burch to return. As Burch came to the door, Coy swung the door into the guard, forcing him off balance. Capturing Burch's rifle, pistol and ammunition, Coy dropped the hand gun and the key to D-block down to Cretzer. Coy then entered the D-block portion of the gun gallery to cover Corwin. Corwin opened the steel connecting door from isolation to B and C-blocks, and Cretzer and Hubbard stormed into D-block. Corwin was then put into the same cell as Miller. Cretzer released Shockley and several others, but the electronic doors that secured solitary confinement cells were not accessible by any of the keys they had. Coy was simultaneously releasing Thompson and others from C-block.

Several officers sauntered into the cellhouse on their normal rounds and were quickly captured and put into the cells with Miller and Corwin. Officer Stucker, on duty in the basement bath and clothes



Marvin F. Hubbard



Miran Thompson



Sam Shockley

area, sent several inmates up to the cellhouse. When no guard let them back in, they returned to Stucker. He called Captain Weinholds, the armory officer, assuming there was a major fight among the prisoners. They sent three other officers into the cellhouse to aid those already there. They all were captured, and soon the cells were holding nine officers. At 1:30 p.m., officer Fish, in the armory, notified the warden of the silence in the cellhouse. Associate Warden E. J. Miller heroically tried to enter the cellhouse armed with gas billies. Coy had put on Weinhold's uniform, and began to shoot when Miller entered. Miller threw one of the gas billies at Coy. It bounced off a beam and burst in Miller's face. Burned and scarred, Miller still managed to escape and report the situation to Warden Johnston. The siren was sounded and the world became aware of the "Battle of Alcatraz."

The Coast Guard and the San Francisco Police were notified, then Washington, D.C. A press release was issued to calm the local population. Warden Johnston directed the round-up of all prisoners working and otherwise out of the cellhouse into the recreation yard. A detachment of U.S. Marines offered to stand watch over the prisoners herded into the yard. Officers, off duty on the mainland, were called in for a general meeting.

Sporadic gunshots, aimed predominantly at the towers, were coming from the inmates in the building. Additional officers were sent to the towers, perimeter walls, and the basement doors to the kitchen and clothing areas. Meanwhile, Lieutenants Bergan and Johnson hatched a plan. Johnson and two officers opened the door and repeatedly fired down the dark corridor. Bergan, with officer Stites,

Mahan, Richberger, Oldham and Cochran rushed into the first level of the gun gallery. They found Burch where Coy had tied him, as well as rifle fire from the top of C-block, and Cretzer firing the hand gun from the floor of C-block. Cochran, Oldham and Richberger were wounded in the confusion. Stites was repeatedly wounded, and subsequently died. (In all fairness, it should be mentioned that "unnamed but informed sources" contend that Stites' bullet wounds were from behind him, and that the calibre of the bullets was unlike the armament the prisoners had. It is assumed that over-zealous tower guards heard the shooting and opened fire in panic. Authorities "covered up" Stites' accidental death so as not to mar the heroic effort he had made in returning the prisoners' fire that exposed him to their bullets.)

Bergan, Clark, Mahan, Bloomquist and Burch stayed in the gallery and remained in telephone contact with the warden. By 10:00 p.m. a rescue squad of fourteen volunteer officers began to retake the A, B and C-block cells. The chief concern was the fate of the nine hostage officers. The crew entered the corridor between C and D blocks as one of them yelled the whereabouts of the hostages. They were in cells 402 and 403. Despite gunfire from the inmates above C-block, the guards worked their way to the east end and managed to close the D-block door. The guards in the cells were released but Miller, Corwin, Weinhold and Simpson were in critical condition.

Apparently in their frustration on not having the key to the recreation yard, Cretzer began shooting at the guards in the cells. Thompson, Carnes and Shockley returned to their cells, leaving Coy, Cretzer and Hubbard with the aborted attempt but with plen-



Chained together are Thompson, Shockley and Carnes returning to Alcatraz after arraignment



The bodies of the three convicts found in the utility corridor

ty of ammunition.

Trapping the three rogue-escapees took nearly two days, as they were using the access ducts and passageways to maneuver among the cells. Associate Warden Miller with a marine officer began the task of flushing out the killers with gas grenades. When these proved useless, demolition and anti-tank grenades were supplied by the army. By 10 o'clock Friday night the guards ceased firing on D-block, when it was established that the three were on the east side of one of the utility corridors. At 7:00 Saturday morning two officers opened the utility doors. The bombings had left the corridor dark and damp. At the end of the mess lay three bodies. Rigor mortis had set in on Coy and Cretzer. They had died the night before, still holding their guns. Hubbard was also dead, though more recently, and further back from the other two.

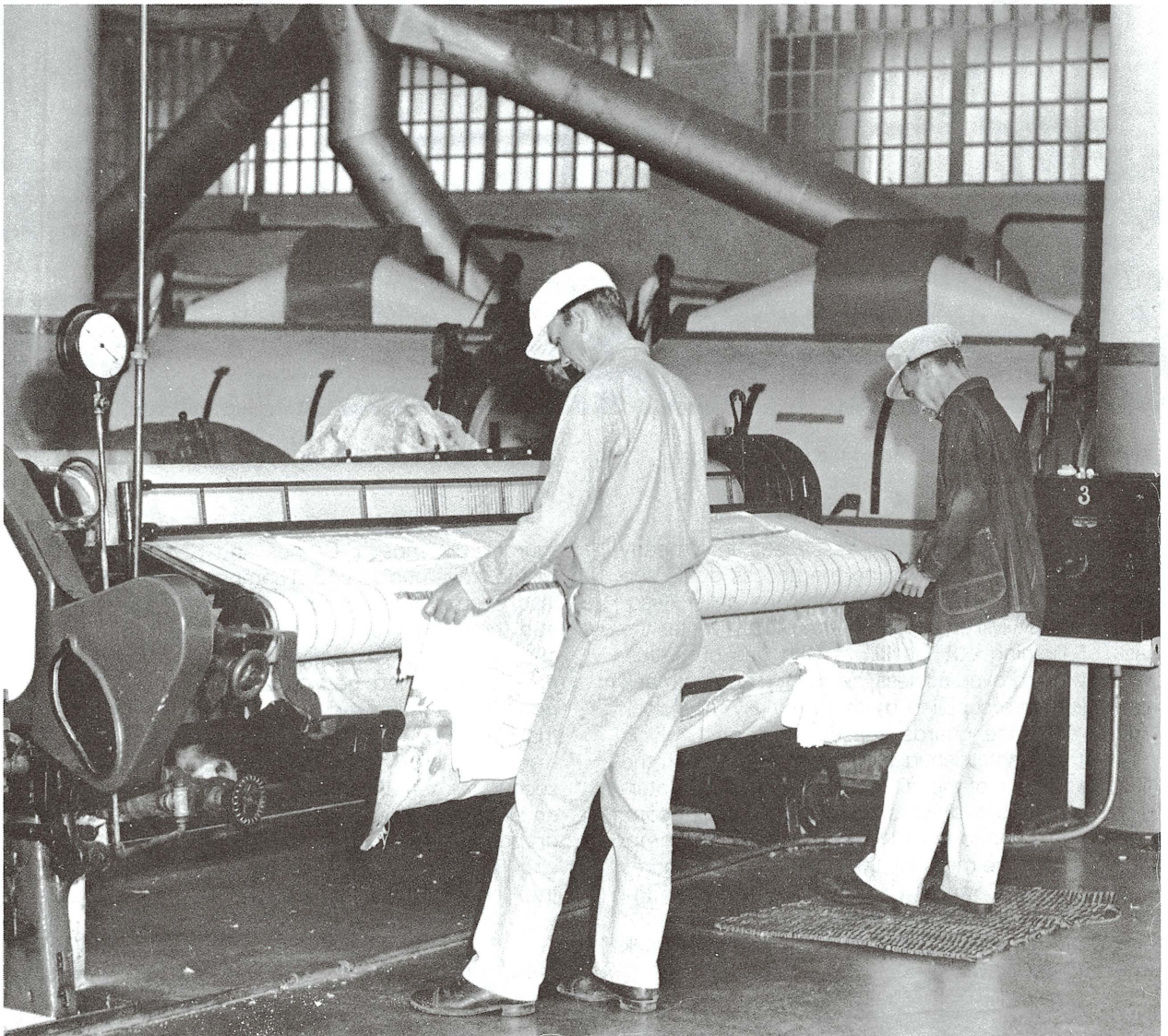
Officers Miller and Stites had died. For Miller's murder, Thompson, Carnes and Shockley went to trial in November, 1946. Thompson seemed to care less, Carnes' plea was that he went along because he had been told of a tunnel in the "old Spanish dungeons"; and Shockley, whose IQ was reportedly near 54, believed he was a radio receiver getting news from the airwaves around him. He felt that the trial should be held in either Mexico or Spain, as they were the true owners of Alcatraz. Carnes was given a second life sentence (probably due to his age), while on December 3rd at 10:04 a.m. cyanide gas pellets, dropped into sulfuric acid and water, killed Shockley and Thompson at San Quentin. The "Battle of Alcatraz" ended without an escape.

11 July 23rd, 1956

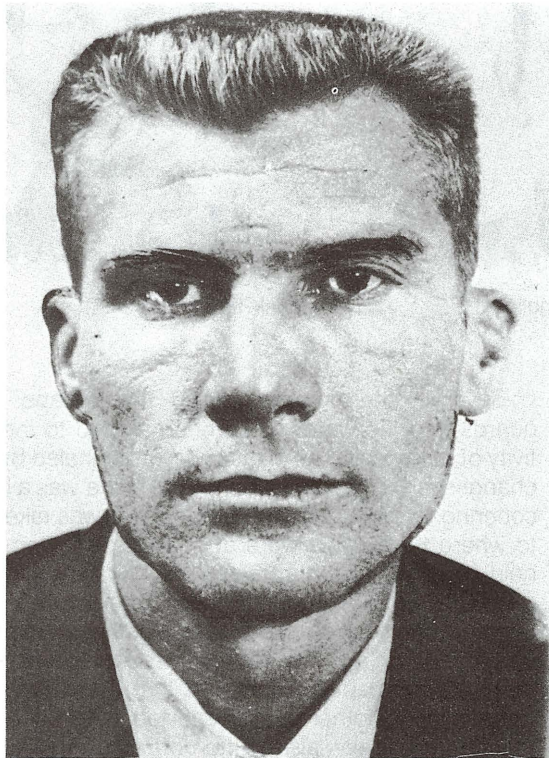
Floyd P. Wilson was serving a life sentence for murder when he attempted escape. It was the afternoon of July 23 when he disappeared from the dock crew. He had stashed 25 feet of sash cord and had intended to tie a driftwood raft together. His absence was quickly noticed and a loud alarm sent search parties all over the island. Preventing exposure to the searching guards, he hid in a rock crevice near the shore. He eluded the tower guards by working his way around the sea wall. It took nearly 12 hours to find Wilson and abort his escape.



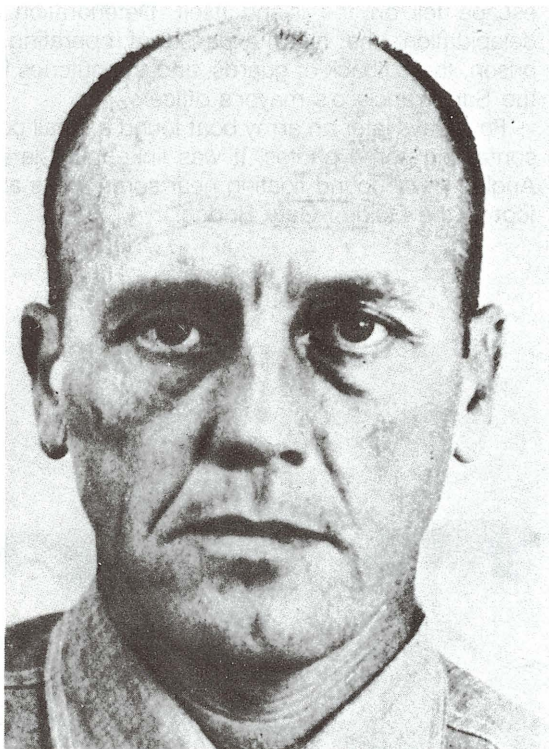
Floyd P. Wilson



Prisoners working in the laundry



Aaron W. Burgett



Clyde M. Johnson

12

September 29th, 1958

Clyde Johnson, a bank robber serving 40 years, and Aaron Burgett, a post office robber serving 26 years, attempted to escape while working on a garbage detail. They were working in the areas outside the walls of the cellhouse. They tied the supervising guard to a tree, taped his eyes and mouth shut, and left him there on the southwest side of the island. Minutes later another officer discovered the bound guard, but it took the Coast Guard two hours of circling the island to spot Johnson. He was knee-deep in the bay holding dearly to the jagged wall of the island.

Burgett remained missing. The search continued and soon grew into a nationwide alert. It was not until thirteen days later that a tower guard spotted a body floating in the bay. The launch was sent out to recover it, not far from the island. The badly decomposed remains were identified by fingerprints to be Aaron Burgett. The unpredictable currents of San Francisco Bay had brought him back.

13

June 11th, 1962



Clarence Anglin



John William Anglin



Frank Lee Morris

Hollywood and Clint Eastwood have chronicled their version of the Frank Lee Morris escape. This cleverly plotted, engineered and executed plan may have resulted in a successful escape. The world may never know.

Brothers John and Clarence Anglin were bank robbers who worked with Morris in the development of his scheme. The trio were in Atlanta together before transfer to Alcatraz. The preliminary work took months and was reported to originally include nine inmates.

At the rear of each cell is a 10 by 6-inch ventilator hole covered with a metal screen. Through the use of kitchen utensils, the three dug away at the rotting cement and fashioned cardboard "grills" to replace the vent covers. They used their painting kits that were issued to them for artwork, to make the new covers. They expanded the openings to allow their passage and made their way out. They went via the conduits in the utility shafts behind the cell walls. They built a work area recessed above their cells where they worked constructing makeshift life preservers from stolen raincoats and soap-and-concrete-powder dummy heads. The intricacy of the heads was impressive, the hair coming from the barber shop, and all coloration done through the use of their art kits.

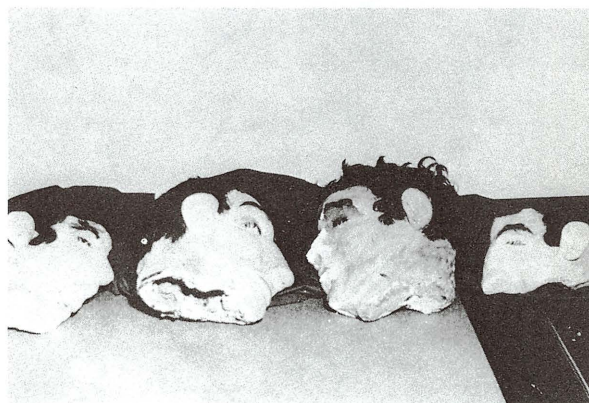
On the night of Monday, June 11th, some time after the 9:30 count, they situated the dummy heads in their bunks and bade farewell to their cells. During the routing head counts through the night, guards repeatedly fell for the ruse. From the utility corridor they had spent months chipping away at the tool-proof bars that secured the ventilator shafts that led to the roof.

The cellhouse roof vent provided the route to the roof and from there they shinnied down to the ground below. They went over the 15-foot perimeter fence and haven't been heard from since.

Ironically, as with the Cole and Roe disappearance, the tides were at a negative 8 miles per hour that June night. Water temperatures were 54 degrees, and it is officially presumed that all three perished.

Several other ironies shroud this escape. The guards and the warden had been alerted to the activity of the prisoners. An attempt was signaled by the changes in the prisoners' behavior. There was a lot of cohering among them and extra notice was taken as to where the guards were at all times. The inmates held small shaving mirrors outside their cells trying to gain an edge on the guards making their rounds. The night of the escape, a new captain of the guards was on duty. When a perimeter guard reported noises on the roof, the captain explained that it must be the wind. When another guard reported loud activity by the seagulls it was also written off as a stray cat or dog. (Seagulls were a natural alarm for the seasoned guards, basically because there were no pets allowed on the island.) Still, the official blame for the escape fell on the island itself. Deterioration and delapidation, the huge expense of operating the prison, the cutback of guards, and the outcries from the San Francisco's mayor's office.

Four days later an army boat found a small pouch containing some photos. It was linked to Clarence Anglin. It was found floating near some rocks at the foot of the Golden Gate Bridge.



Dummy heads made of soap and concrete powder

14 December 14th, 1962

The cost of the prison was determined to be excessive. Plans were in the final stages, to close the institution, when John Paul Scott, a 30-year-term bank robber, working in the kitchens with Darl Parker, a bank robber doing a 50-year stretch, managed to loosen the bars over a store-room window with twine soaked in wax and covered with cleanser. The method took several years to accomplish, and had apparently been handed down, for completion, to Scott and Parker. Late in the afternoon of December 14th the two snaked their way through the tiny opening. They then shinnied up a pipe on the outside of the building and went over the roof. They got down to the ground on a length of electrical cord they had stolen.

Using inflated surgical gloves stuffed into pant legs, the two entered the chilly waters. Parker made it as far as a rock about 50 feet off Alcatraz; the rough currents and severe cold had sapped his strength.

Scott was either hardier or motivated enough to make it to the rocky shore below Fort Point. The fort is located at the southern end of the Golden Gate. He was spotted by some teenagers who alerted the authorities. He was hauled to shore, near death. Scott was suffering from hypothermia and was badly bruised. He was taken to Letterman General Hospital, on the base, for immediate treatment. Local reporters hurried to the scene to get a story before the prison officials could intervene. The media were not able to get much information on the activities of Alcatraz throughout its federal years. Scott told his side of the story, which was undoubtedly laced with exaggeration. This led to an increase in bad public opinion.

As soon as Scott was healthy enough for transport, he was brought back to Alcatraz. This, the last attempted escape from Alcatraz, was as the first, a failure.

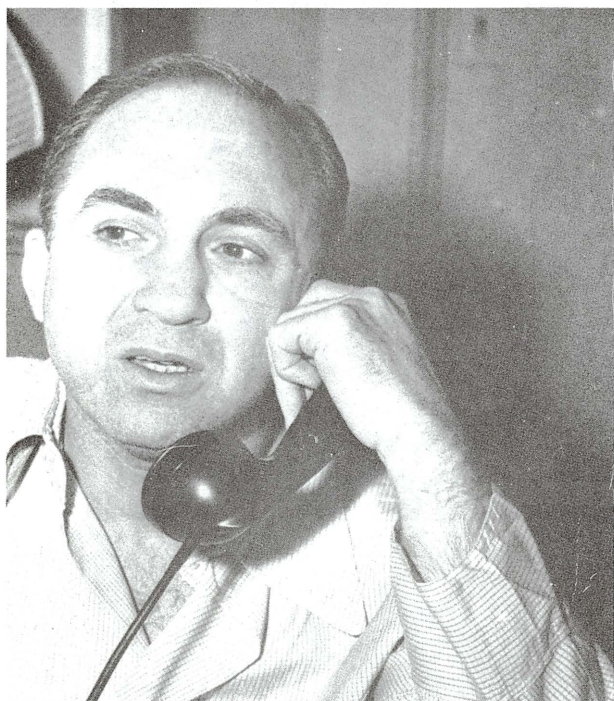


John Paul Scott

Darl Lee Parker



Eliot Ness, "G-man" who crushed Al Capone



Mickey Cohen AZ1518, Ex pro prize fighter, New York racketeer became a cleanliness fanatic while on Alcatraz.



E. Hoover, Director of the FBI, was instrumental in creating and continuing support of Alcatraz.



Attorney General Robert Kennedy on closing of Alcatraz: "Let us reject the spirit of retribution and attempt coolly to balance the needs of deterrent and detention with the possibilities of rehabilitation."

Consensus has it that Alcatraz maintained its "escape-proof" claim. While the buildings, routines and guards provided extreme deterrents for an escapee, historically it was the final hurdle of San Francisco Bay that proved their undoing. It is curious, that the salt water of the bay had a great deal to do with the closing of the prison.

The buildings were rapidly disintegrating. The concrete used to build the cell walls, in the refurbishing of the main building, was very porous and absorbed salt from the air. Though reinforced with steel rods, the concrete was degenerating prematurely. Frank Morris and the Anglin Brothers proved that an inmate could tunnel through the walls in a matter of weeks instead of years. John Paul Scott had proven that a prisoner could survive, though barely, the swim.

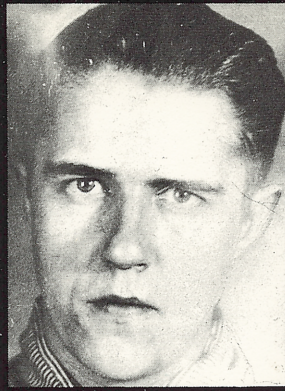
The sewage lines had always led into the bay, but now the residents of the bay area demanded that this practice cease. Renovation and rebuilding was required to make the island safe and sanitary, not to mention "escape proof." Combined with the expense of operating the facility, the increased local outcry to close the doors, and a national campaign to "rehabilitate" prisoners, Attorney General Robert Kennedy announced the closing of Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary in 1963. The last prisoner left the island, in leg-irons, on March 21, 1963.

"Alcatraz never was no good for anybody."

—Frank Watherman, the last prisoner to leave Alcatraz



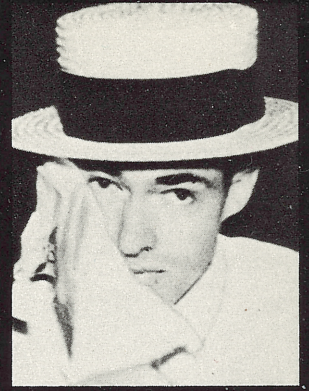
Al Capone



Alvin Karpis



Stroud, "The Birdman"



Fred Hunter



Bernard Paul Coy



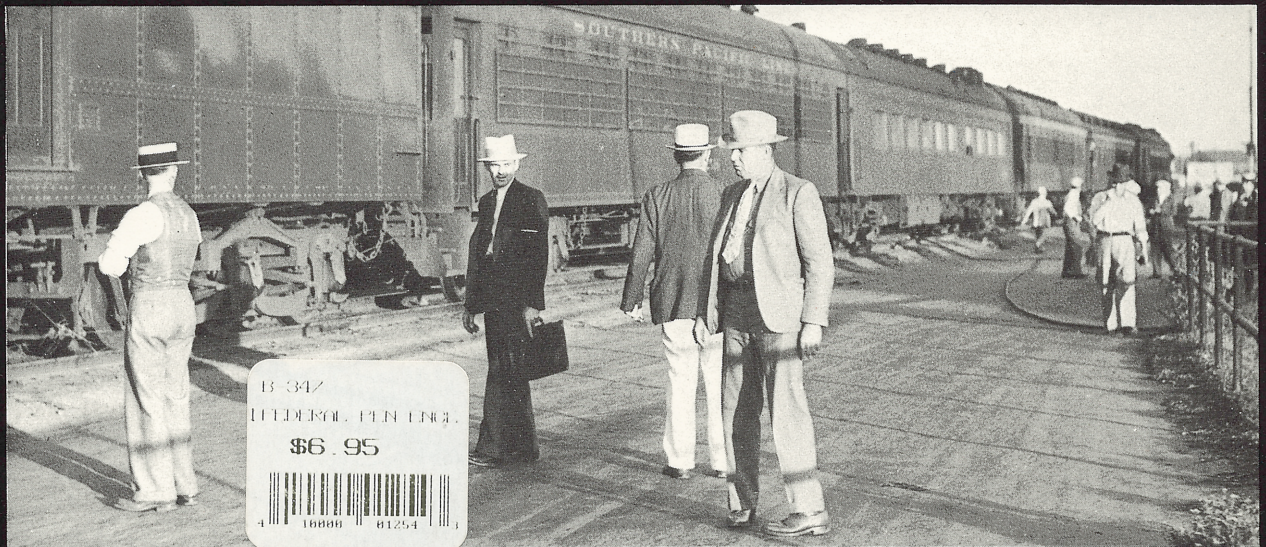
Joe Cretzer



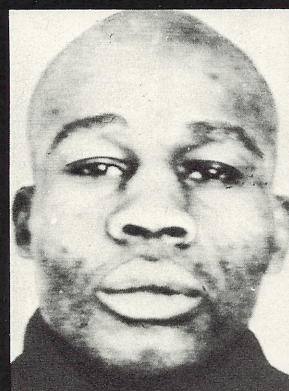
Miran Thompson



Marvin Franklin Hubbard



Federal prisoners en route to Alcatraz Island



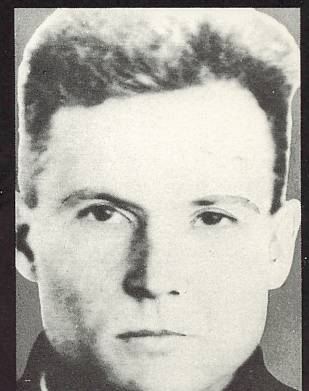
William Martin



Rufus McCain



Dale Stamphill



Henri Young